


AT THE NORTH OF  
BEAR CAMP WATER



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To Florence Ellena Bunton

Christmas 1907



**Books by Frank Bolles.**

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# AT THE NORTH OF BEARCAMP WATER

*CHRONICLES OF A STROLLER IN  
NEW ENGLAND  
FROM JULY TO DECEMBER*

BY

FRANK BOLLES

AUTHOR OF "LAND OF THE LINGERING SNOW"



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY  
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### Invitation

To drink the wine of mountain air  
Beside the Bearcamp Water.

WHITTIER, *Among the Hills.*

## AT THE NORTH OF BEARCAMP WATER.

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### A THUNDERSTORM IN THE FOREST.

DURING nearly the whole of the forenoon of July 3, 1892, a soft rain had been falling. It had begun in the night to the discomfiture of the whippoorwills, but not to the extinguishment of their voices. It continued until nearly noon, when the wind shifted from east to west, patches of blue sky appeared, and ever and anon gleams of sunlight fell upon the distant forest across the lake, or slid slowly over the tree-tops on the side of Chocorua. Bird voices grew stronger with the promise of fair weather. Hermit thrushes, veeries, red-eyed vireos, and Maryland yellow-throats sang four invitations from as many points of the compass, and I said Yes to the veeries and sought the swamp. A New Hampshire swamp is full of attractions at all seasons. In winter the great northern hares make innumerable paths across its soft snow,



and tempt the gunner into the chilly gloom in search of a shot at their phantom forms. In spring a host of migrating warblers makes merry in its tree-tops, and the song of the winter wren is sent from heaven to give joy to its shadows. Summer brings to it many a shy orchid blooming among the ferns, and the fisherman finds the trout in its brook's placid pools long after they have ceased to bite well in the upper reaches of the stream. There are no venomous serpents hanging from its moss-grown trees, no tigers concealed in its brakes, and no ague lingering in its stagnant pools. It is a safe swamp and kind, yet none the less a swamp.

When I reached its borders, after crossing the meadow, I found wild roses in bloom. It was of these, doubtless, that the veery was singing so bewitchingly. Certainly nothing less fair could have prompted such magic music. Moreover, the veery's nest, framed in nodding osmundas, is near these beautiful blossoms, with many a pool and thicket between it and hard ground. Passing into the darkness of the swamp, I glanced back at the sky. The north and west were filled with black clouds which were stirred by passionate winds in their midst. A low growl of thunder came through the heavy air. I felt as though forbidden to enter the mysteries of the swamp, as though warned that

danger lay within those aisles of twilight. The veery ceased its song. No bird voice broke the stillness of the gloom, and a hush of expectation held every leaf motionless. The branches closed behind me and I stole on between lofty trees with mossy trunks, over fallen logs, and through the dripping jungle of ferns. Upland woods are cleaner, stronger, more symmetrical than swamp growth, but they have not the effect of tropical luxuriance which the swamp forest possesses. The mosses, lichens, ferns of many species, climbing vines, and such large-leaved plants as the veratrum and skunk cabbage, give to the moist land an air of wealth of leaf-growth which is distinctive.

Two species of orchid were conspicuous, rising just above the ferns. They were the purple-fringed, just coming into bloom, and the white, which was abundant. Splashing back and forth through the shallow pools, gathering the spikes of the white orchis, I did not at first notice a distant sound which grew in volume until its sullen vibration could not be ignored. The tree-tops above me gave a sudden, vicious swish. Crows to the westward were cawing wildly. The roar of the storm became unmistakable; the swamp grew darker; a few big drops of rain fell, and then, as though a train were plunging down noisy rails upon the forest,

the rain and wind leaped upon the trees, filling the air with deafening sounds, and twisting the branches until it seemed as though the whole structure of the woods was about to collapse in one vast ruin. Then through the tormented tree-tops the floods fell. They were white like snow, and seemed to be a fallen part of a white sky which showed now and then as the forest swayed back and forth in the wind's arms. Wet as the swamp had been before, its colors became more vivid under this deluge. Every leaf grew greener, and each lichen gave out new tints as it drank in rain. The trunks of the trees assumed more distinctive shades; that of the ash became brown, of the yellow birch almost like saffron, and of the canoe birch glistening white. The rain pelting into my eyes bade me look less at the sky and more at the beauties at my feet. Beauties there surely were at my feet, both of color and form. There were no flowers, but the leaves were enough to satisfy both eye and mind, — large leaves and small, coarse and delicate, strong and feeble, stiff and drooping. Some were long and slender, others deeply cleft, some round, or smoothly oval, others shaped like arrow-heads. Some received the rain submissively and bowed more and more before it, others responded buoyantly as each drop struck them and was tossed off. In some

the up-and-down motion communicated by the falling drop was by the formation of the leaf-stalk transformed at once into an odd vibration from side to side, which was like an indignant shaking of the head.

Looking at the marvelous variety in the outlines of these gleaming leaves, I suddenly found my memory tugging me back to the schoolroom where I was first taught botany. I recalled one melancholy morning when my teacher, who knew neither the derivation of botanical terms nor the true beauties of botanical science, ordered me to commit to memory the list of adjectives applied to the various shapes of leaves. The dose prejudiced me against botany for full ten years of my life, yet here in this glistening carpet of the swamp I saw "lanceolate," "auriculate," "cordate," "pinnate," written, not in letters of gold, but in something equally impressive to the memory, and much more easy for a dull teacher to obtain.

When one is in the deep woods and a flash of lightning comes, the eye seems to see a narrow horizontal belt of light play swiftly across the foliage immediately in the line of vision. If I looked at the ground I caught it there; if my eyes were fixed on the low branches at a distance, the flash was there. Each flash was promptly followed by the glorious mountain

thunder which is so much more impressive than that in level regions. At first heaven was rent by the sound; then mountain after mountain seemed to fall in noisy ruin, the great ledges tumbling in upon each other with deafening shocks; then the sound rolled away through the sky, striking here and there upon some cloudy promontory and giving out a softened boom or waning rumble.

For full twenty minutes the trees writhed in the wind, the rain fell, the leaves nodded and shivered under the drops, and the rhythmic roar of the rain was broken irregularly by the thunder. As time passed, the shower slackened, the thunder followed the lightning at longer and longer intervals, the wind seemed to take deeper and less nervous breaths, and I listened to discover what creature of the swamp would first raise its voice above the subsiding storm. A mosquito hovered before me, dodging the drops in its vibratory flight. If it was buzzing I could not hear it. Suddenly a single call from a blue jay came, in a lull of the wind, from a thicket of spruces. "Yoly-'oly," it said, and was silent again. I took a few steps forward, and the shrill alarm-note of a chipmunk sounded through the gloom. I strolled slowly through the drenched and dripping woods fragrant with the perfume of moss and mould. It was more

like wading than walking, for every leaf had a drop of cold water ready to give away to whatever first touched it. A ray of sunlight dodged through the lifting clouds and fell into the swamp. The song of a parula warbler, distilled by it, floated back skyward. As the west grew golden and blue, bird-songs sounded from every quarter. The merry chickadees, conversational vireos, and querulous wood peewees vied with each other and the tree-toads in replacing the orchestral passion of the storm by the simple music of their solos.

Leaving the swamp, I climbed the terrace marking the ancient border of the lake, which once included the swamp in its area, and passed through a grove of slender birches and poplars. Their stems, streaming with rain, were as bright as polished marble, and their foliage, illuminated by the clear sunlight, was marvelously green against the deep blue of the sky. Presently a vista opened northward, and at its end rose the dark peak of Chocorua. After a rain this towering rock presents a noticeably different appearance from its normal coloring. Most of its surface is covered by lichens, one species of which, when dry, resembles burnt paper. When rain falls upon these lichens they alter their tints, and the burnt paper species in particular becomes so green that a wonderful

change takes place in the whole coloring of the mountain. Looked upon through the birch vista, the air being clear and clean, and the colors of the mountain uncommonly bright, the peak seemed near at hand, and even grander than usual. There are few things in New England as truly picturesque as this horn of Chocorua. Three thousand feet above its lake and the level of the Saco, the great rock lifts itself with bold and naked outline into the midst of the sky. No foot seems able to creep up its precipitous slopes to its dizzy tip, and even the sturdy spruce can cling only to the deep clefts in its storm-swept ledges. There was a time when the forest reached to its crest, and when the cold rocks, now naked, were covered deep in soil and mosses. Passaconaway, close by, shows how this could have been, and how Chocorua must have looked draped in evergreens. Fire and hurricane destroyed the trees; the parched soil was washed away from the rocks; and now the only trace of the old forest growth is an occasional bleached stump or log hidden in a cleft in the ledges.

As I strolled homewards I passed a spot where the linnæa has covered several square yards of ground in a birch wood. The tiny bells had rung out their elfin music for the year. By dint of laborious search on hands and knees



I found eight of the flowers, still wonderfully fragrant though somewhat faded. All the rest of the chime had fallen. Not far away a growth of dogbane fringed the path. I picked some of its blossoms and held the two sets of bells side by side in my hand. The comparison made me feel sorry for the dogbane.

## THE HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN.

FLOATING upon the clear waters of Chocorua Lake in the latter part of a warm July afternoon, and looking northward, I see the coolness of night beginning to grow in the heart of the mountain. At first there is but a slender dark line marking a deep ravine, through which a brook flows; then the shadow widens until a great hollow in the mountain's side is filled with shade. As the sun sinks the shadow reaches higher and higher upon the wooded flanks of the two spurs which hold the hollow between them, until at last only the vast rock of the peak, resting upon its forest-clad shoulders, is left warm in the sun's rays. The point where the shadow begins to form is more than a thousand feet above the level of the lake. From it, reaching upwards, two folds in the forest drapery extend towards the foot of the peak. One marks a brook coming from the upper part of the right-hand ridge, the other a brook which rises at the very head of the left-hand, or west ridge. The heart of the mountain is the wild ravine where these two streams mingle in per-

petual coolness and shadow. No path leads to it and few are the feet which have found a way to its beauties. There is a peculiar charm in a spot unknown to the many. Its loneliness endears it to the mind, and gives its associations a rarer flavor. If besides being unfrequented it is singularly beautiful in itself, it becomes a shrine, a place sacred to one's best thoughts. To me the heart of Chocorua is a shrine, all the more valued because of the weariness of flesh required to attain to it.

Early on the morning of July 10, I set out across the pastures for the foot of the mountain. The sun was hot, the air hazy, and not a breath of a breeze made the aspens quiver. In the shaded hollows something of the night's chill still lingered, and from them floated the psalm of the hermit and the gypsy music of the veery. Now and then the clear, cool phœbe-note of the chickadee reached the ear, in contrast to the trill of the field sparrows which came from the warmest parts of the grass-land. On the hill to the westward young crows with high-pitched voices clamored for food, and quarreled with each other on their shady perch in the beeches.

The flowers which bloomed by the path were children of heat, types of midsummer. Buds were large on the goldenrod, the St. John's-wort was in full bloom, and so, too, were the diurnal

evening-primrose, the fleabane and dogbane, both worthy of sweeter names; the yarrow, as disagreeable among flowers as a cynic is among men; the tall potentilla, yellow clover, and, representing the purple flowers, the brunella. In many places thick beds of checkerberry, decked with brilliant berries, were made gayer by many heads of the brunella growing through them. The brunella is shaped somewhat like the conventional chess castle, but the castle is never quite complete while blossoming, owing to the lack of harmony among the many little flowers which unite to form its head. Low, running blackberry dotted the banks with uninteresting white blossoms, and the stiff spikes of the spiræa were abundant. The daisy, stigmatized as white-weed by the indignant farmers, still displayed a few battered blossoms, which kept company with heads of red and of white clover. After passing these flowers of summer, it seemed strange, on descending into a deep cup-shaped basin where a small pond fed by springs is shaded by lofty oaks and birches, to find the houstonia still in full glory, and the dwarf cornel blooming in dark and mossy nooks. Animate nature takes solid comfort in a hot day. As I stole softly downward to the shore of the little pond, scores of tadpoles shot away from the edge of the water into its green depths.

Painted tortoises, which had been baking on logs and stones in the full glare of the sun, dropped off unwillingly into the water. Countless dragonflies skimmed the surface of the pond, devouring smaller insects, and from a dead limb overlooking the shore, a crow, whose plumage gleamed with iridescent lights, flapped sluggishly out of sight among the trees. Snakes love to lie coiled in the hottest sunlight; squirrels stretch themselves contentedly on horizontal limbs and bask by the hour; the fox, woodchuck, and weasel, and even toads and newts, and those so-called birds of darkness the barred owls, seek the broadest glare of the midsummer sun and absorb comfort from its scorching rays.

Taking tribute from the pond-basin by a deep drink of ice-cold water at a spring in its bank, I crossed another strip of open pasture — where the tinkle-tankle of the cow-bells sounded with each bite the cows took of the grass — and gained the edge of the forest and the foot of the mountain. There was something akin to coolness in the shade of the birches, poplars, and beeches. New flowers bloomed here and new birds called. The dependent bells of the white pyrola, of the small green pyrola, and of the quaint pipsissewa were found beneath the brakes. Here, too, was the Indian pipe, looking as though formed from sheets of colorless wax,

and its tawny sister the pine sap (*Monotropa hypopitys*). The wintergreens are strong, positive herbs with rich pungent flavor, but the pale parasitic plants are mere negations. They are the "poor relations" among flowers, content to draw their sustenance from others, while showing no color, giving out no perfume, attracting no butterflies, and not even daring to face the blue sky until they are dead.

The oven-bird stepped primly about upon her neat carpet of dry leaves, the red-eyed vireo preached his perpetual homily from the tree-tops, a young Cooper's hawk screamed shrilly in the distance, and two inquisitive red-capped sapsuckers hitched up and down tree-trunks near me, while I hooted at them after the manner of my barred owls. A grouse had been wallowing among the leaves, and had left a round hollow in the dust with five discarded feathers and the prints of her feet to show that she had been there. *Rana sylvatica*, the wood-frog, betrayed himself by leaping over the dry beech leaves. I followed him quickly as he sought to elude me. Not only were his leaps long, but his skill in doubling was something marvelous. His second jump was generally at right angles with the first, and thrice he no sooner struck the ground than he turned and rebounded upon his tracks, so that he passed over or between my feet.

When he was weary I caught him and, laying him on my knee, stroked the nape of his neck, his back and sides. He soon ceased to struggle and sat motionless. I laid him gently on his back and stroked him beneath. His throat throbbed and his eyes blinked, but he made no effort to escape. Then I restored him to his proper position, and extended one leg after another. He was as pliable and nerveless as a rubber frog. Finally I let him alone, wondering how soon he would hop away; but he showed a willingness to spend the day on my knee, and not until I placed him on the leaves did he seem to awaken to life and the advantages of freedom.

A few rods beyond, a toad hopped from me and I followed him to see what method of escape he would adopt. As soon as he saw that he was pursued he increased his speed and by a series of rapid hops reached a cavern under the arched root of a stump and plunged out of sight in its depths. Our toads, although of but a single species, vary in color from black to the paleness of a dry beech leaf. This one, living in the midst of pale browns and yellows, was nearly as light in tone as the light-footed *Rana sylvatica*.

The color of the dry beech leaves as they lie upon the ground is sometimes curiously be-



witched by the spots of sunlight which dapple the woodland carpet. Walking with the sun behind me, the sunlight, especially where it fell in small round spots on the beech leaves before me, was of an unmistakably amethystine hue. Several years ago when I first noticed this, I supposed it to be due to temporary causes, but I am now convinced that the color will always be distinguishable when the conditions named are favorable.

The loveliest July flower in the woods fringing Chocorua is the mitchella, named by Linnæus for Dr. John Mitchell of Virginia. In their small round leaves of dark glossy green, their creeping stems, their modest, delicate-tinted and highly-perfumed blossoms, the flower of Linnæus and the flower of Mitchell are much alike. The partridge-berry, as the mitchella is commonly called, begins to bloom just as the linnæa bells cease to swing. It is an evergreen, and all through the winter its bright green leaves and red berries are one of the pledges of returning life after snow and ice have vanished. The flower is small and faces the sky. It is white with a delicate rosy blush tinging its corolla, chiefly on its outer side. The four pointed petals open wide and curve back, exposing the whole interior of the flower to view. Each petal is covered on its inner

surface with a thick velvety nap which is the distinguishing characteristic of the blossom. The perfume of this flower is both powerful and pleasant. When freshly picked it suggests the scent of the water-lily, coupled with something as spicy and enduring as the heavier perfume of heliotrope.

Fifteen or twenty minutes' walking over the beech leaves brought me within hearing of the torrent which flows from the heart of the mountain. Presently I came to the edge of its cutting and saw far below me, through the trees which filled the gorge, the flash of its waters and the vivid green of mosses. Walking upstream along the face of the bank, yet neither climbing nor descending, I struck the level of the water at a point not many rods distant. I had not gone down to the brook; it had come up to me. The whole ravine was filled with its music, and following down with its eager flow was a current of cold air. Above, in the woods, quiet and heat had prevailed. Here noise and coolness ruled with absolute sway. The sound came in waves as did the water and the breeze, but no human senses could measure the intervals between the beats. The sound seemed threefold, — a splash, a murmur, and a deeper roar. The roar reached me even if I pressed my hands tightly over my ears; while, if I made

ear-trumpets of my hands, the splashing thus intensified drowned the heavier sounds. The rhythm of the water was most prettily shown on a boulder faced with thick moss. When the high water came it poured over the top of the rock, and the moss was filled with white shining drops coursing downward through it; but, on the reaction, it instantly became vivid green. The same pulsation showed in each cascade, which was greater then less, greater then less, in each second of time. As I bent over a pool, taking now and then a sip of the icy water, a small trout suddenly jumped near the foot of the fall below. He was intensely busy working about in the edge of the falling water, where rising bubbles and whirling foam half concealed him. In color he looked not unlike a beech leaf, and he moved so constantly that only an attentive eye could distinguish him from the waste of the stream whirled about in the eddies. I cast him some moss and mould, and he darted hither and thither in the water clouded by it, snapping up bits of food or specks which he mistook for food. His eagerness and restlessness seemed born of the restlessness of the stream and the keen temperature of the water in which he lived.

There was something of the impressiveness of the sea in this mountain brook. The sea rolls

its waves upon the shore by night and by day all through the endless years, and this brook rolls down its tons upon tons of water by night and by day forever. It seems impossible that this and all the other streams which flow down rocky mountain-sides can be nourished simply by the softly falling rain and snow.

Much of the fascination of the sea is in its voice, so seldom hushed, so often roused to anger. The torrent by which I stood had something of the same weird power. For the moment, all outside those narrow wooded steeps, between which the splash, murmur, and roar of the stream pervaded everything and overwhelmed everything, all beyond that controlling sound was forgotten, barred out, lost. All within the power of the stream was under a spell, cooling, soothing, comforting.

To reach the heart of the mountain nearly a mile of brook bed had to be traveled, so I climbed upward rock by rock, past falls and pools, clusters of nodding ferns, bridges of ancient trees now hung with mosses, and sloping ledges faced with moss, down which the water rolled in glistening sheets. At one point the brook, years ago, had cut through a ledge which crossed its path diagonally. One great shoulder of rock remained, protruding from the western bank and hanging over the water, which poured

into a black cavern beneath, making a whirlpool in the darkness. The temperature under this ledge was nearly forty degrees lower than on the top of the bank a few yards above. Standing by the ledge, I counted nine distinct cascades varying from three to six feet in height. One of them was an ideally symmetrical fall, for the whole body of water, gathered between two rocky faces, fell into a deep round pool just at its centre. Another fall showed clearly why the water under a cascade looks white. The water poured into a very broad, deep basin at its upper corner, leaving most of the surface undisturbed; and between the limpid falling water and the flat face of rock behind it air was caught and sucked downward by the flow. It was carried to the very bottom of the pool, where, breaking into small round bubbles, it struggled to the surface. Strings and masses of snow-white bubbles filled the area in front and at each side of the fall, while some were drawn some distance down-stream by the escaping water. These bubbles, when under water, produced the whiteness of the pool, and, on reaching the surface, burst and made a large part of its foam and spray. In this pool, as in many others, small trout hovered about the edge of the rising bubbles, seizing upon everything which looked like food. They rose with charming promptness to

anything resembling a fly which I tossed upon the surface of the foam.

As I neared the heart of the mountain I saw, towering above twin cascades which fell into a single pool at its feet, the rough likeness of a sphinx. It was a huge boulder, dividing the torrent by its lichen-covered mass, and lifting its frost-hewn face towards the narrow strip of sky left between the trees overarching the ravine.

Close above the sphinx a spring in the eastern bank filled a hollow in the hill with cold, fern-decked mud. A flower I never should have sought in this lofty nook had taken possession of the spot and raised hundreds of its white spikes towards the sky. It was a white orchis, *Habenaria dilatata*. In a space six feet by ten, I counted seventy-five of its plants, each in full bloom. On the edges of this miniature swamp the leaves of the mayflower mingled with those of the linnæa. The blossoms of the mayflowers were dry and brown; those of the linnæa, with one fragrant exception, had fallen. Close by, the open-eyed flowers of the oxalis smiled from their beds of clover-shaped leaves.

A few rods farther up the stream, the land grew steeper and the walls of the ravine drew more closely together. Taller trees presided over the torrent, and the water struggled downward between larger boulders. A stream, tum-

bling down its narrow bed, came from the high eastern ledges and met that which poured from the heights on the west. Here, in the perpetual music of falling drops, where one or another of the great walls of the gorge always casts a deep shadow upon the ferns, is the heart of the mountain, the birthplace of the twilight.

Early in the afternoon I followed the western stream to its source, where, in a dark hollow at the head of the west ridge, hidden wholly from view by the forest, lies a small mountain lake. Perhaps it would be more truthful to call it a large pool, fed as it is mainly by melting snow or the streams of rain-water poured into it from the crags of Chocorua. Beneath its shallow water the maroon and dark green sphagnum formed a submerged carpet of intense colors. The growing tops of the moss, star-shaped and erect, glowed with the tint of life. The borders of the pool were fringed with dense growths of yellow-green *Osmunda regalis* which were swayed by a sweet wind. Through the soft foliage of the deciduous trees surrounding the pool, lance-shaped spruces and balsams pierced a way for themselves towards the sky. No fish were visible in the pool, and its only living tenants seemed to be some tadpoles about the size of squash-seeds. Now that the noises of the brook no longer overwhelmed every other sound, the



songs of birds could be heard. Red-eyed and solitary vireos, oven-birds, a black-throated blue warbler, a hermit thrush, and another thrush which was neither hermit nor veery, were singing either in the woods close by or among the small spruces which crowned the adjoining ledges. I climbed to the top of the nearest ledge in search of the thrush, and gained not only the full benefit of his song, but a view of many a mile of the fair lake country, the Bearcamp valley, and the rugged peaks of the Sandwich range. The air was full of quivering heat and hazy midsummer softness. Over the shoulder of the Ossipees, south of Bearcamp Water, sparkled Squam Lake and Winnepe-saukee. The hayfields of Sandwich were baking under the sun's fierce heat. North of them began the mountains, — Black Mountain in the edge of Campton, Whiteface, Passaconaway, and, nearer at hand, Paugus, towards which all the western ridges of Chocorua were tending. The sun being over and beyond these wooded mountains, they were very dark, lacking in detail, but clearly outlined against one another. Northward and just above me the cliffs of the Chocorua horn hung in the sky. The lichens on the crag were dry and very black. Towering into the air, ledge upon ledge, and cliff over cliff, the peak was like a huge citadel defying

attack. I had climbed upon the shoulders of the mountain, but its proud head, held high, was still out of reach.

The thrush was one which is common upon the upper slopes of the mountains, wholly replacing the veery there and probably outnumbering the hermit. Its song, while pleasing, is not as musically beautiful as that of the hermit, nor yet as unique as the veery's. The hermit has three distinct phrases, the veery one, and Swainson's several which are not distinct, but rather jumbling reproductions of the same notes. If this bird had learned his song for himself, I should surmise that he had listened closely to a veery and a thrasher, and then tried to model a combination of their notes upon the lines of the hermit's exquisite song. Perhaps it was the heat and the glare of light on the ledges, or perhaps it was a certain dullness in the Swainson's song, at all events I wearied of it and sought a higher ledge beyond the pool.

On this higher ledge, lambkill (*Kalmia angustifolia*) was blooming in great abundance. It is a handsome flower, and it goes a little way to console us for not having mountain laurel. Between two great patches of lambkill and flowering diervilla was a level strip of gravel. It bore printed on its face an interesting history. Beginning near the edge of a thicket

and extending to the edge of the cliff, where a view of miles of surrounding country could be obtained, was a line of sharp hoof-marks. A deer had walked slowly to the verge of the ledge, presumably to survey the landscape. The track had been made since the rain of the day before, and, for all that I could see, might have been made within an hour. While studying it I heard an unfamiliar bird-song reminding me slightly of the Maryland yellow-throat's. The bird was in the thicket. I crept towards him, but he retreated, singing at intervals. After following for some time, I tried working on his sympathies, and "squeaked" like a bird in distress. Instantly a flash of vivid yellow came through the trees and a magnificent male magnolia or black and yellow warbler appeared in search of the supposed sufferer. His mate soon joined him, as did a junco and two white-throated sparrows. The coloring of the magnolias is certainly gay. It includes blue-gray on the head, black on the back, canary-yellow beneath and on the rump, with white and dark bars, stripes, and spots enough on various parts of his body to make him as variegated as a harlequin.

While the magnolia warblers are members of the Canadian fauna, and seldom seen in the breeding season south of the White Mountains,

the bird which I next heard singing was even more interesting. It was a male blackpoll warbler, perched upon the highest plume of a spruce and pouring out his unmusical *ze-ze-ze-ze-ze* with all a lover's earnestness. He clearly considered two thousand feet rise on Chocorua equivalent to several hundred miles' flight towards Labrador. In this the flowers sustained him, for growing near by was the charming *Arenaria grœnlandica*, with its cluster of delicate white flowers springing from the sand, and the *Potentilla tridentata* blooming freely. Apparently dissenting from this boreal majority was a bunch of goldenrod in full bloom. It was a mountain species which comes into flower a fortnight or more earlier than its lowland relatives.

My homeward path followed the crest of the great eastern ridge of Chocorua as it descends towards the basin of Chocorua ponds. The ridge is narrow and mainly open, save for a few stunted spruces. In every direction far-reaching and beautiful views charmed me and tempted me to linger. From the last of the open ledges, the top of what is called Bald Mountain, I saw the sun set just behind the peak. Then with quickened pace I entered the forest and ran through the gathering gloom down the rough path to the pastures a mile below.

## A LONELY LAKE.

SIX witheringly hot days had been followed by one so cool and clear, so full of rushing Arctic air, that all nature sparkled as on an autumn morning. About sunset on the evening of this cool day, — July 17, — the pale blue sky in the north was suddenly barred by ascending rays of quivering white light. Chocorua, lying dark and still against the cold sky, seemed to be the centre of the aurora. As it grew dark I watched to see the heavens glow with the electric flame, but hour after hour passed with only an occasional gleam of light. Shortly before sunrise, however, the promised illumination came. I awoke to find my chamber as bright as though day had come, for from the southeast moonlight streamed across the floor, while from the north the glow of the aurora flooded the room. An immense arch of throbbing white light crowned the northern sky, and within it a smaller coronet rested above the inky blackness of Chocorua. Between the two hung the Great Dipper, and from one to the other occasional pulsating rays passed. The eastern end of the

upper and larger belt of light made a sharp bend inward a few degrees above the horizon, and to a less defined extent the smaller arch was similarly shaped. The effect of this curve at the base of the two bows was very remarkable, for it destroyed the image of an arch and created the impression that one was looking into the inner curve of a ring which surrounded the earth, just as the rings of Saturn encircle that planet. Gradually the lower ring faded, the upper one settled down closer and closer to Chocorua; masses of electric energy seemed to dart across the eastern sky, where Sirius and the fair Pleiades gleamed, to the moon and Mars sailing serenely on their westward way. Behind Pequawket the lowest line of sky grew white. The dawn was coming, and, as though to avoid it, the hurrying beams and flashing waves of aurora moved faster and faster until in their dimness they could scarce be seen. Snowy mists raised their phantom forms from the lake and floated eastward to meet the sun. A whip-poorwill sang his last song to the night, and as the glow of day grew more real a hermit thrush told in its heartfelt music the joy of life at the birth of a new period of labor.

A scrap of mist which trailed over the forest just at the foot of one of the ridges of Chocorua was the spirit of a lonely lake rising to do hom-

age to the day-star. This lake is a rendezvous for all that is wildest and freest in the animal life of the region. It is sufficient unto itself, and yields no tribute save to its lord the sun. Around it, high glacial walls stand, crowned with ancient oaks and graceful birches. No stream flows from it, or into it, unless threads of ice-cold water coming from springs in its banks are called streams. Its waters are deep, the fisherman, so they say, finding places in its centre where long lines reach no bottom. Seen from the peak of Chocorua, this lake, even in November, is as green as an emerald, and when one floats upon its surface and gazes far down into its depths, rich green water-weeds are seen stretching their tremulous fingers towards him, and crowding each other for standing-room on its muddy floor.

Many are the days I have spent at this lonely lake learning the secrets of its tenants, and this morning, soon after the auroral beauties had faded from the sky, I came to it while the dew sparkled on the ferns. Drifting with the wind on the water, or stretched on the soft mosses which flourish under the birches, I stayed by the lake until evening. If an observer keeps still, it matters little whether he sits hidden under the spreading branches of a great oak on the shore, or lies upon a raft anchored in the

lake, he is sure to see something interesting in either case. One morning, as I leaned against the oak's wide trunk, watching a bittern on the opposite shore, I noticed that the bird showed signs of uneasiness, paying more heed to the bushes than to its fishing. Suddenly the cause of its unrest became apparent. The bushes just behind it were slowly poked apart and the head of a fox appeared. With a guttural note of alarm the bittern rose and flew across the lake, above the trees on the opposite bank, and out of sight. Reynard, graceful and alert, stood upon the mossy shore for a moment, looking after his lost opportunity; then turned abruptly and vanished in the underbrush. Another morning, while I was under the same tree, a big blue heron came softly stepping along the beach towards me. He was a comical figure, with his attenuated legs, wasted to the semblance of rushes; his extensible neck, expressive of centuries of hungry reaching after the partly attainable; and his long beak as cruel as a pair of shears. His dull eyes told of terror when he saw me. For a moment I felt their worried glare, and then the quaint machinery of the bird was put in motion and he flapped off out of sight.

One still, cloudy afternoon in August, I lay upon a raft of weather-beaten logs and mossy



boards, watching the fitful sky and listening to an occasional bird-note, when suddenly my eyes were drawn to the north shore of the lake by seeing a branch of green leaves swimming, apparently unaided, along the surface of the water. After progressing for forty or fifty feet it disappeared under the ripples. A mystery, truly. A few moments later a muskrat's head rose above the water, and the creature swam back to the point from which the leaves had started. Leaving the lake cautiously, the rat crawled clumsily up the bank into the bushes. After a minute or two it came waddling out bearing a second branch of ash, and this, too, floated along the placid surface of the lake until abruptly drawn down into the rat's burrow in the submerged bank. Later in the afternoon I noticed a V-shaped ripple plowing across the lake from the southern shore. On it came, a small, dark object being at its point, parting the water steadily. As it drew near the raft I saw that the dark spot was the head of another muskrat, whose course was shaped straight for the hole into which his mate had been carrying ash branches. He passed quite close to me without alarm, and a minute or two later the ripple ceased as the rat sank below the water a few yards from the mouth of the hole.

The same still, cloudy day, a brownish black

creature appeared on the southern shore of the lake and ambled along the edge of the water. At first glance it looked like a black kitten, but a plainer view showed it to be twice the length of a kitten, although no larger round than a man's wrist. Its progress at times was almost snake-like, so undulatory was it. Its head and fore-quarters would be gliding down one side of a log before its black tail and hind feet had quite reached the log on the other side. The edge of the pond was lined with tadpoles clinging to logs and stones, with their heads towards the shore. The black creature seemed to be attempting to catch these fish-like batrachians, for every few yards he pounced at something, and, if successful, cantered out of sight, into the weeds and bushes, where he remained until, so I surmised, he had eaten his adolescent frog. Although the raft was only about a hundred feet from the western shore of the pond, the mink kept his course past me, apparently without a thought of anything beyond the wary polywogs. He went as far as the mouth of the muskrat hole and then turned and retraced his cantering until I lost sight of him on the farther southern shore. Several times, in his eagerness to catch a tadpole, he plunged wholly beneath the water and pursued his prey as though he had been a pickerel.

At the northeastern corner of the lake there is a grove of oaks, the largest of which doubtless stood there before this part of New England was settled by white men. Squirrels hold this grove as frisky tenants-in-common with woodchucks and raccoons; a family of porcupines having a right of way across it by virtue of unopposed use running back till the memory of rodents knoweth nothing to the contrary. I have never been so fortunate as to find 'coons in the grove, although some of my household have found them, but I have seen their footprints in the April snow. They are strange footprints, which one can never mistake for any other. If the dearest, plumpest baby in New England patted the soft snow with its dimpled hands, it could not make daintier images of its little palms than this wild creature of the forest makes with its feet, as it hurries over the new-fallen snow. The most conspicuous squirrels by the pond are the great bushy-tailed grays; the most retiring are the refined little flying-squirrels, which live in a deserted woodpecker's hole in a dead tree. The grays climb after acorns to the highest limbs and branchlets of the oaks, frequently breaking off leafy twigs, and dropping acorns to the ground. Below, watching for and improving their opportunities, are striped chipmunks, which gather up a por-

tion of the harvest and conceal it in their burrows. Chickaree, too, is there, nervous, petulant, and noisy, but he is more likely to be found in the pines, or near the butternuts. In winter, especially, the pine woods are alive with red squirrels. I recall seeing twenty red squirrels in a single midwinter day. Chipmunks may be seen late in December, and by the end of February, if it is warm, and the mouths of their holes are not covered by snow, they are ready to take a peep at the sky. They store enormous quantities of food, and the heat and moisture of their nests is such that they can eat corn sprouts and acorn shoots in midwinter while poor Chickaree is scratching about in the cold snow for an unnibbled pine cone. The gray squirrels are fond of the high-bush blueberries, which grow in abundance on the margins of the pond. They come down from the oaks to the great fallen trees lying half on the shore and half in the lake, and bask in the sunlight, drink of the water, and run up and down the logs with tails arched and waving behind them.

The home of the porcupines is west of the pond on the slope of a heavily wooded hill, the sides of which are encumbered by very large boulders. Beneath one of the largest of these boulders and overhung by one almost as large,

which rests against its mate, is the porcupines' den. By lying down between the rocks and crawling forward into the mouth of the den I can see several feet into its black interior. A passage large enough for a hound to squeeze through leads out of sight below the rocks. Quills and hairs line the ground, and other marks of long occupancy are abundant. I have been told by farmers that they had killed old "hedgehogs" weighing nearly fifty pounds. Tales are told of white porcupines, and it is impossible to shake the hunter's belief in the brutes' power to shoot their quills at their enemies.

The skunk is a well-known character at the pond, but I have not sought her society, and it is an open question whether she lives in a deserted woodchuck hole or among the boulders on the porcupine's hill.

So far as I know, Bruin never comes to my pond. He lives within sight of it among the oaks and blueberry patches on the ledges of Chocorua, and if his small eyes ever scan the landscape from the cliffs above the heart of the mountain, he can see its emerald water gleaming in the sunlight. I am more than willing not to find his huge footprints on my mosses. Deer, on the other hand, go freely and frequently to the pond, and in May and June come to the garden patch below my cottage.

Wings even more than feet bring wild life to the lonely lake. The first time that I ever saw the waters of the pond flashing and rippling in the sunlight, wings awoke the echoes of the basin as a flock of black ducks rose at my coming and vanished behind the oaks. Wood ducks nested for years in a hollow oak by the shore. One bright October morning a black tern, borne by storm or waywardness of wing, came to the lake with five black ducks. That tiny mirror in the deep woods seemed to please the weary sea-bird, for it rested there many hours, and even when alarmed circled for a while in the sky and then returned to the spot where Chocorua's horn was reflected in the mountain pool. The great numbers of tadpoles and frogs always to be found in the lake attract not only the great blue heron and the bitterns, but also the night herons, which sometimes come in flocks of eight or ten to fish in the lakes of this region. Early in August of each year a kingfisher appears at the pond and passes much of his time by it. There are certain dry branches upon which he perches one after another in order, as he circles round the pond uttering his harsh rattling cry. I suspect that fishing of the same kind goes on after dark, for the lake is a favorite resort of the barred owls, whose trumpet tones are heard nightly at certain seasons.

More than once I have seen them on branches above the water, or floating on noiseless wing from shore to shore. The fondness of this owl for frogs and fish is remarkable, particularly for hornpout, which abound in this lake. I have known my captive owls to strike a fish with their talons when it was several inches below the surface of the water in a tank.

Many a time as I have been hidden by sheltering boughs, scanning the lake and its shores for signs of life, I have seen a dark shadow glide across the water, and then a broad-winged bird alight noiselessly on a dead limb from which the whole surface of the lake could be seen. Its face would express cruelty and hunger, apprehension and something akin to remorse. The eyes of a hawk are full of meaning; they tell the story of guilt and of the eternal misery of spirit which follows guilt. The hawks which come to my pond are of several species, including the slow *buteos*, which one sees circling by the hour in the high skies; the dangerous *accipiters*, so ruthless in their raids upon poultry and small birds; and the low-flying, graceful, mouse-hunting marsh hawk, readily to be known by its white rump. At evening the whippoorwills and their cousins the night-hawks frequent the lake. Just at twilight I have heard six whippoorwills at once singing



their strange song on the edge of the water. Perhaps they come there to bathe; at all events they sing only for a moment, after which only an occasional cluck or "whip" betrays their presence. Late in August the night-hawks fly in large companies, and as many as twenty-five have sometimes wheeled into the lake's basin and circled over it, to the consternation of the small frogs.

Behind the great oaks, in which scarlet tanagers breed, there is a level overgrown with gray birches. Nearly a dozen of these trees have been converted into drinking fountains by a family of sap-sucking woodpeckers, and through the summer days, as long as the sap is sweet and abundant, the indolent birds cling to the trunk, sip the tree's lifeblood as it drains away, and catch a few of the many insects which hover around the moist bark. The product of the trees is shared with several humming-birds, and the insects attract small flycatchers and warblers.

To tell of all the birds which either live near the lake or come to it more or less regularly, would be to recount the doings of most of the six-score species which are found in the Chocorua country. The lake is not only a favorite place of resort for resident birds, but it is a section of one of those dimly recognizable



"lines" of migration along which bands of spring and autumn birds seem by instinct to take their way year by year. On this "line," above the lake shore, I met my first and only Philadelphia vireo, one of the rarest of our migrants.

The vegetation of the lake shore has a great deal to do with its power to attract animal and bird life. I know of some woods which are forever silent to bird voices, and in which the snows of winter seem untrodden by any foot save mine. The lake was once in the heart of a white pine forest. Scores of huge stumps show where the giant trees lived until a tornado overturned them. Now the canoe birch is the prevailing tree, and few creations of the New England soil can rival it in grace, beauty, and useful qualities. The forest's carpet of gray and green mosses, wintergreen, checkerberry, linnæa, dwarf cornel, asters and goldenrod, ferns and brakes, is strangely lacking in one flower generally common to the region. I have searched for half a mile in every direction from the pond and failed to find more than one root of the mayflower. That root, with its three or four clusters of flowers, is well hidden in a deeply shaded and poorly watered spot, where its future is threatened by a lack of all the elements which make plant life prosperous. Near this solitary root

of mayflower there grows an eccentric blueberry bush, which bears pale pink and white berries very sweet to the taste, but which never grow blue. Here, too, is to be found the shy little snowberry, whose fruit has the art of hiding itself beneath glossy round leaves, so that close search is needed to gather it. Along the banks of the lake high-bush blueberries of fabulous size tempt the stroller from his course. Some of these berries were once mistaken for fox grapes. In the moist sand at the foot of these blueberry bushes, the modest houstonia blossoms throughout six consecutive months of the year. It comes in May, and it fades not until November. The bunchberry retains its flowers in these groves until long after its berries are red elsewhere. Yet autumn flowers are not noticeably slow in blooming by the lake. One of these autumn flowers is an interesting hybrid, so recognized at the Gray Herbarium. For four years we have found several roots of a golden-rod which is neither the *cæsia*, which it closely resembled in form, nor the *bicolor*, from which it inherits its white ray flowers. Both of these familiar species grow near it, and are presumably its parents.

Within the waters of the lake there is abundant life. Years ago it was a famous trout pond, stocked perhaps by the Indians, but the

malice of the white man spoiled it. A man who had a grudge against those who most enjoyed trout-fishing in the lake caught a pailful of horn-pout and turned them into the green waters. They multiplied, and now legions of them move their hideous bodies back and forth through the swaying weeds beneath its surface. They never grow large, but their numbers are appalling. Sometimes when, in a still summer evening, the surface of the lake is unruffled by wind, and myriads of small insects have fallen upon the water, the pout appear in countless multitudes, swimming so that their horns or tails show above the water.

The tadpoles also are extraordinarily numerous at some seasons, and they, too, have a way of coming to the top of the water and contemplating the upper world, to which they hope some day rightfully to attain. A sudden stamp of the foot upon the shore will cause hundreds of these floating polywogs to splash into foam the water over half the surface of the lake. The painted tortoise lives in the lake, but no other creature of his kind is found near it. In fact, I have never seen the spotted turtle in the Bear-camp valley. I once dug seventeen painted turtles out of one hole in the mud on the western edge of the lake, where they had crowded for some reason of their own.

Of all the many creatures which frequent the lonely lake, the big blue heron seems to be the most in sympathy with its shy silence and loneliness. He is its king, and by his name the lake is known.

## FOLLOWING A LOST TRAIL.

OF the many roads which start northward from Bearcamp Water, every one is either warded off by the Sandwich range into the Saco or into the Pemigewasset valley, or else smothered in the dark forest-clad ravines between the mountain ridges. From Conway on the east to Campton and Thornton on the west, there is no rift in the mountain wall through which travel flows. There was a time, however, before the Civil War, when near the middle of the great barrier the human current found an outlet southward from the upper end of Swift River intervale to the Bearcamp Valley. Sitting by the fireside of a sturdy Albany farmer as the December moonlight gleamed upon the level snows of the intervale, I heard stories of the lumbermen's journeys through those dark and narrow passes. Great spars and masts, the farmer said, had been hauled out of the valley under the frowning cliffs of Paugus, and carried safely to the level fields of Sandwich. Then there arose a storm such as old men know but once in a lifetime, and the passes were filled

with tangled masses of wrecked forest. All the axes in Albany and Tamworth could not have cut a way through the snarl without many weeks of exhausting labor. So at least thought the lumbermen who attempted to pass the abattis raised by the storm. Years elapsed and the road became only a matter of vague tradition. Those who climbed the peak of Passaconaway or the lofty ledges of Paugus saw below them a panorama of ruin. Bleached bones of the great spruce forest lay there piled in magnificent confusion. Over the débris, springing from its midst, a dense growth of mountain ash, wild cherry, and hobble-bush made the chaos more chaotic. No trace of the lost trail was visible even to the most fanciful eye.

Between Paugus and Chocorua the hurricane had not done its worst work. There one could see four miles of narrow ravine reaching from the Tamworth fields directly northward to a steep ridge connecting Paugus with Chocorua at their northern slopes. On the other side of the barrier lay the Swift River intervalle. If that ridge were out of the way, if it could be easily surmounted, or if a rift could be found in it, the journey of nearly thirty miles from the southern spurs of Paugus, round through Conway to the northern spurs, would be reduced to eight or nine miles. The people living at

the upper end of Swift River valley, instead of having to travel sixteen miles to a post-office, doctor, minister, or store, could touch civilization by driving about eleven miles.

At half past four on the morning of Saturday, July 30, I drove rapidly away from my red-roofed cottage towards the southern foot of Paugus. Long days of parching heat had been brought to an end by a series of three heavy thunderstorms, which had drenched the country during the preceding evening. Nature had revived. The sky was bluer, the forest greener, the gold of the goldenrod more intense. Every particle of dust had been washed out of the air and off the many-tinted garments of the earth. For nearly a fortnight the mercury had been among the nineties as often as the clock struck noon. To face a cool breeze, to see everything sparkling with moisture, to have the air feel and appear thin and clear, was inspiring and exhilarating. To find the lost trail into the Swift River valley was now a matter of delightful interest.

At the southern foot of Paugus is a ruined mill and an old lumber camp. A good road leads thither from the highway, and the house at the point where the lumber road begins is the home of Nat. Berry, farmer, lumberman, hunter, trapper, surveyor, carpenter, and pub-

lic-spirited citizen. I felt that if any man on the southern side of the mountains knew a way through them, that man was Berry. Two years before, while wandering over the ridges of Chocorua, I had been caught in one of Berry's forty-pound steel bear traps. The springs of the trap were weak and it was deeply buried in the moss, so that before its cruel jaws had closed firmly upon my ankle, I thrust the stock of my gun between them and withdrew my foot. Berry's greeting, as we drove up to his house, showed that he had not forgotten my adventure, for he shouted, "Come at last, have you, to let me cut off them ears? Can't c'lect my bounty on you without 'em." A few words told Berry of my errand, and he at once showed interest in the quest.

"Thirty-seven year ago," he said, "when I was only twelve year old, a road was run through from this house to the back settlements. It was a winter road, but I recollect that a man and his wife drove over it in a pung. They went clean through. About fifteen year ago I went in where you are a-going, with a railroad surveyor, and he said there was only five hundred feet rising between here and the height of land. There used to be another road between Toadback and Passaconaway, but that 's all choked up now by the harricane. This road is



between Toadback and Coroway, and I know that four miles of it is about as good going now as ever it was."

It required little urging to induce Berry to join us, and our horse's head was turned northward into the lumber road leading to the lost trail. As we drove away from fields, roads, and the surroundings of habitations, animal life grew less and less abundant, and plant life less varied. Around the farms robins, sparrows, and swallows are to be seen or heard at every hour in the day. Woodpeckers and chickadees abound in the orchards, and even hawks spend more time in sight of hen-yards than they do in the gloomy solitudes of the mountains. By the roadside goldenrod was in its glory, while St. John's-wort was growing rusty. The pink of hardhack and thistles large and small, the yellow of the mullein, the reds of fireweed, pasture lily, and the sumac fruit, the purple of vervain, early asters, and the persistent brunella, and the white of the exquisite dalibarda, of immortelles, arrowhead, and the graceful spiranthes in turn caught the eye as the wagon rolled by pasture and sandbank, meadow, copse, and swamp.

From Berry's house we drove a long mile before the true primeval forest was reached. There, in a clearing of an acre or more, were

the ruins of a saw-mill, two or three slab houses, and a collapsed stable where the lumbermen's oxen had been kept in the winter nights, years ago. In the mill's time sawdust had covered everything; but now the strong, quarrelsome blackberry had mastered the sawdust. Our guide pointed to a break in the solid wall of woods surrounding the mill, so we struggled through the blackberry jungle and left the sunlight behind us. As we entered the forest, bird music ceased, few flowers decked the ground, — the pallid Indian pipe seeming more akin to the fungi than to flowers, — and not a squirrel disturbed the quiet of the endless aisles. Here and there small brightly colored toadstools and the fruit of bunchberry or clintonia lent a bit of vermilion, orange, yellow, or lustrous metallic blue to the dull brown carpet of the woods; or a branch of maple, prematurely robbed of its chlorophyll, gleamed in the far-off sunlight among the tree-tops. If by chance the eye caught a glimpse of the flowers of the rattlesnake plantain, or of some of the greenish wood orchids, it found in them less color than in the toadstools and less perfume than in the needles of the balsam.

There extended before us a clearly marked passageway between the giant trunks of ancient trees. It was the beginning of the old trail.

Stout young saplings had grown up within it, and the long interlacing stems of the hobble-bush, or "tangle-foot" as Berry called it, concealed its many inequalities. We proceeded slowly, cutting away bushes as we went, and the horse followed with the wagon, which rose and fell over logs and boulders as though tossed on the waves of the sea. At the end of half a mile, we decided to leave the horse with all of our impedimenta except axes and luncheon. A space was accordingly cleared, and Kitty, tied to a large tree, was fenced in on two sides to prevent her from walking around the tree, and so choking herself.

The trees which formed the forest were of many kinds, making it much more interesting than the monotonous spruce growth of the higher slopes. Those which were to all appearance the oldest were the yellow birches, hundreds of them having trunks over ten feet in circumference at a point two feet from the ground. Some of the giant hemlocks were larger, but they are, I believe, trees of more rapid growth than the yellow birch and so probably less venerable. There was a large representation of ancient beech-trees with trunks which looked as hard as granite, yet which made me think of wrestlers with swollen muscles strained and knotted under the tightly drawn

skin. Some of the beeches seemed to have begun life in mid-air, for their trunks rested upon tripods or polypods of naked and spreading roots, which held them two or even three feet from the surface of the soil. In other cases these polypods clasped great boulders in their unyielding embrace, showing that the beech in its infancy had taken root upon the top of the rock, and year by year extended its thirsty tentacles lower and lower down the sides of its mossy foundation until the soil was reached. Then the hungry sapling, fed for so long on meagre supplies of food and water, must have expanded with sudden vigor, while its roots grew strong and gripped the rock in tighter and tighter embrace. The only way of accounting for the empty polypods seemed to be to suppose the trees to have sprouted upon stumps prone to decay, or upon rocks capable of rapid disintegration. Many of the glimpses through these beech woods reminded me of the grotesque forest pictures which are produced so frequently in German woodcuts.

Huge maples, with bark resembling that of ancient oaks, formed an important part of the forest, and so did canoe birches of various ages, solitary white pines of immense height, and old-growth spruces, the last named becoming more and more numerous as our road gained higher

levels. Dozens of these trees had been struck by lightning and more or less injured. One had been completely shattered and surrounded by a spiral abattis of huge splinters stuck firmly into the ground.

The twilight and silence of the forest made it restful at first, but as the day wore on, rare glimpses of distance and of sunlight were as welcome to us as to men confined between prison walls.

We had gone rather more than three miles from Berry's house when our guide paused and said: "There, the old road is missing for a piece beyond this, and the best we can do is to head north and spot the trees as we go."

To that point there had been evident, to eyes accustomed to forest travel, a difference between the continuity of large timber and the strip once cleared of this timber in order to form the road. Looking back, we could see the passage; looking forward, there seemed to be no trace of it. The greater part of Paugus had been passed on our left, and on our right the peak of Chocorua, which at Berry's had been northeast, was now a little south of east from us. Before us the valley narrowed somewhat, and far ahead a continuation of the ridge of Paugus seemed to cross the northern sky line and approach the northern spurs of Chocorua.

Blazing the trees as we walked by them, both on our left and on our right, on the south side of the trunks and on their north sides also, we pushed forward due north. Ever since leaving the ruined mill our way had lain close to the foot of Paugus, the width of the valley being between us and the foot of Chocorua. Nearly a mile was traversed before we touched the wall of Paugus barring the north and forcing us to bend eastward. Entering a narrow ravine, none too wide for a single road at its bottom, we came once more upon the lost trail. Marks of the axe were frequent, but the great hemlocks which it had felled were mere moss-covered pulp, and from their stumps viburnum or young trees had sprouted. Berry found spots on the trees which he remembered to have made when he guided the engineer through the pass fifteen years before. The walls of the ravine grew steeper, and across it fallen trees occasionally blocked the way. Presently it bent sharply to the left, so that we were once more headed northward, and then it widened into an amphitheatre half a mile in width, wholly surrounded by steep and rocky sides. The old trail was again lost, and Berry declared that out of this pocket there was no outlet save over the towering ridge at the north. The story of the man and woman in a sleigh, who had once crossed

this frowning barrier, alone sustained our hopes of finding a pass which could be opened to wheels.

My watch said that it was 10.30 A. M. As we had begun our first meal at four A. M., a second one seemed appropriate; so in the face of our frowning crisis we lay upon the moss and made way with the larger part of our knapsack's contents. A red squirrel, inquisitive, petulant Chickaree, came down from the ridge and chattered to us. Far above in the tree-tops two birds called loudly to each other. Their notes were new to me, and so shy were they that I secured only a distant glimpse of them through my glass. They seemed to prefer the highest tips of dead trees, from which they darted now and then into the air after insects. It did not require much knowledge of birds to assign this noisy couple to the family of the tyrant flycatchers, and their size was so great as to make them one of three species, — kingbirds, great crested flycatchers, or olive-sided flycatchers. As I knew the first two well, from daily chances to watch their habits, I felt practically certain that these keepers of the pass were the wild, wayward, and noisy olive-sided flycatchers of which I had heard so often, but never before met on their breeding-grounds. Luncheon over, we faced the barrier, and, selecting a shallow



ravine in its side, began the ascent. While struggling over huge boulders and winding around fallen trees we did not feel as though wheels were ever likely to go where legs were having so hard a time. Still the ascent was made in less than ten minutes, and to a practical road-builder the slope, cleared of its surface *débris*, would present few serious obstacles.

On reaching the top we gained a view of the peak of Chocorua well to the south of east, and of the ramparts of Paugus, half spruce hung and half bald rock, bounding the long valley through which our morning tramp had taken us. The peak of Chocorua had lost its horn-like contour and resembled more a combing wave dashing northward. It was the only part of the mountain proper to be seen, as in the foreground a massive spur projecting northwestward completely concealed the principal mass. Looking towards the north, the prospect was disheartening. The ridge on which we stood had been a battleground of the elements. It was, in the language of this region, a "harri-cane," and woe to the man who ventures into a "harricane." We advanced cautiously, choosing our ground, and cutting a narrow path through the small spruces, cherry saplings, and mountain maples which had overgrown the fallen forest. Every few steps we came upon



stumps which bore the axe mark instead of that of the storm. We surmised that we had struck a belt which had been "lumbered" before the hurricane had completed its destruction. Fighting on yard by yard, we crossed the top of the ridge and gained its northern edge. There the signs of timber cutting were plainer, and presently I noticed a curious ribbon of saplings reaching down the slope in front of us. The young trees in it were higher than the wreck on each side of it, yet the ribbon was the road and the wreck was all that remained of the forest through which the road had been cut long years ago. The broken thread of the lost trail had been found. Behind us a blazed path reached into the Bearcamp valley; before us the lumber road wound downward a short two miles to the Swift River road, now plainly visible over the sloping tree-tops.

We followed the lumber road down about a mile, searching for a hut which Berry remembered to have seen. As we descended, the "harricane" was left behind, and our ribbon of saplings led into the forest, its massed stems contrasting oddly with the wide-spaced trunks of the primeval growth. Coming to the hut, which Berry said had been built twenty years before, we found it remarkably well preserved. Straw still remained in the lumbermen's bunks,

pieces of the stove lay on the floor, and although the roof had been sprung by snow resting heavily upon it, the hut was as dry and habitable as ever. It even retained the "stuffy" smell of a dirty and ill-ventilated house. It was inhabited, too, not by men, but by hedgehogs, as the American porcupine is universally called in New Hampshire. They had been under it, through it, and over it. Every piece of stair, joist, or floor, upon which salt or grease had fallen, had been gnawed away by them. They had slept in the bunks both upstairs and down, and the stairs bore traces of their constant use.

In front of the hut stood a watering-trough. It was a huge log hollowed by the axe into two tanks, a small one at the upper end for man's use, and a larger one below for the cattle. Small logs had been neatly grooved as spouts to lead the water from the brook to the trough. Moss grew upon them now and the summer sunlight shone upon them, but it was easy to imagine the snow piled high upon the hills, smothering the brooks and burying the rough spouts, and to fancy that over the trampled snow the woolly and steaming oxen came to drink of the water, while a sturdy French Canadian broke the ice with his axe and drank at the spot where from under the snow the spouts led the water into his end of the dugout. The cattle are dead,

the axe has rusted, the Canadian has been killed in a brawl, or has gone back to his River St. Lawrence to spend his old age under the shadow of the cross, but the brook still murmurs over its pebbles, and when snow falls by the trough and the hut it is cleaner and purer than the foot of the lumberman left it.

Woe to the man who ventures into a "harri-cane"! Not content with the road which we had made and found over the ridge, we sought, as we turned homewards, to see whether another lumber road, which came into ours from the southeast, did not cross the ridge by an easier grade. Following it upward higher and higher, we came at last to an open ledge from which a beautiful view was gained. Northward of us frowned Bear Mountain, dark in its spruces. To its left were Lowell, Nancy, Anderson, and the rest of the proud retinue of Carrigain. Deep shadows lay in Carrigain Notch. Bluer and fairer, higher and more distant, the heads of Bond, Willey, and the Franconia Mountains rested against the sky. To the westward, above the long rampart of Paugus with its flat, gray cliffs capped by black spruce, towered the cone of Passaconaway, wooded to its very tip. Southward, just across a deep ravine and behind a heavily timbered spur, was Chocorua, its great tooth cutting into the blue heavens. Though we

enjoyed the picture of the distance, we were filled with something like despair at the foreground. On three sides of us the "harricane" extended as far as the nature of the ground permitted us to see. Westward, along the ridge, in the direction in which lay our trail of the morning, it reached for half a mile at least, and through it we must go, unless, indeed, we preferred to retrace our steps into the Swift River valley and regain our path by such an ignominious circuit. Seen from above, that half-mile of forest wreck looked like a jack-straw table of the gods. Thousands of trees, averaging sixty or seventy feet in height, had been uprooted and flung together "every which way." They were flat upon the ground, piled in parallel lines, crossed at right angles, head to head, root to root, twisted as though by a whirlwind, or matted together as they might have been had a sea of water swept them from hill-crest to valley. Boulders of various sizes lay under the wreck, and, to make its confusion more distracting, saplings, briers, and vines flourished upon the ground shaded and enriched by the wasting ruin.

It took more than an hour to climb and tumble over half a mile of this tangle. Any one who has watched an ant laboriously traversing a stubble-field or a handful of hay, crawling along one straw, across some, under others, and

anon climbing to a height to consult the distance, will know how we made our journey. Men go through great battles without a scratch, but they could not penetrate a "harricane" with any such fortunate results.

The spots on our blazed trees seemed as friendly as home on a winter's night, when at last we reached them and began the southward march. As we had been two hours without water, the first brook drew us to its side and held us entranced by its tiny cascades. In the pool from which I drank, half a dozen caddis-worm cases lay upon the sand at the bottom. They were sand, yet not of the sand, for mind had rescued them from the monotony of their matter and made them significant of life. They had faithfully guarded their little builders while dormant, and now those awakened tenants had risen from the water, dried their gauzy wings in the sun and vanished in airy wanderings. Near the brook lay a dead tree, and upon it were fastened a number of brightly colored fungi. Their lower surfaces and margins were creamy white, then a band of orange vermilion passed around them, while the upper and principal part was greenish gray marked with dark brown wavelike lines. They reminded me, by their color and surface, of the tinted clay images or costume figures which are made by peasants in

several parts of southern Europe, and in Japan. Anything more in contrast with the gloom of a northern forest would be hard to discover. Much of the ground near the brook was covered by yew bushes, on which, brilliant as jewels, gleamed their pendent and slightly attached red berries. The mosses and lichens were the glory of the wood. Never parched by thirst in these perpetual shades, they grew luxuriantly on boulders, fallen logs, standing trees, the faces of ledges, and over the moist brook banks and beds of leaf mould. What the great forest was to us, that the mosses must be to the minute insects which live among them.

So thoroughly had we spotted the trees in the morning, that as we followed our trail back there was not a moment when our eyes hesitated as to the direction of the path.

Four days passed, and on the morning of the fifth a gay column wound its way through the forest following the regained trail. Nearly a score of axes, hatchets, and savage machettas resounded upon the trees and shrubs which encroached upon the road. Behind the axemen came several horses, each bearing a rider as courageous as she was fair. If branches menaced the comfort of these riders, they were speedily hewn away; if the hobble-bush hid

hollows or boulders in the road, it was cut off at the root; if a ford or a bog offered uncertain footing to the snorting horses, strong hands grasped their bridles and they were led through to surer ground. When the difficulties of the road became serious, the horses were left behind and the column pressed forward on foot. The ridge was met and stormed, the "harricane" was safely pierced, the hedgehog's hut was visited and passed, and the old lumber road was followed swiftly down to the grass-land and highway of the Albany intervale. If one woman in days long past had traversed the winter road in a sleigh, others of her sex had now overcome greater difficulties and broken the stubborn barrier of the Sandwich range.

## A NIGHT ALONE ON CHOCORUA.

THE 10th of August ranked, by the family thermometer, as next to the hottest day of the summer. It was a marked day in my calendar, — marked long in advance for a night alone on the narrow rock which forms the tip of Chocorua's peak. It was chosen on account of the display of meteors which, in case of a clear sky, always makes that night attractive for a vigil. On August 10, 1891, I counted two hundred and fifty meteors between sunset and eleven o'clock P. M. As I watched the sky, and saw the great rock of the peak rising sharply into it, I determined that another year I would count my meteors from its summit, and not from the common level of a field.

By four o'clock in the afternoon a breeze had drifted down to us from the mountains, and behind them cloud-heads were rising in the northwest. Fanned by the breeze and undaunted by clouds, I began the ascent of Chocorua by the Hammond path. In the woods the breeze was stifled by the trees, and I was stifled by the still heat which oppressed all nature. For three



miles the only bird I heard was a red-eyed vireo, and the only one I saw was a grouse which flew from the path. In the road below and along the trail up the mountain there were dozens of young toads. They were about the size of the Indian's head on a cent. I wondered how far up the trail I should find them, so I watched closely as the path grew steeper and steeper. The last one seen was about sixteen hundred feet above the sea, and one thousand feet above the Hammond clearing where I first noticed them. There is no still water within a mile of the point where I found the last one. In view of such facts, it is not difficult to account for the popular belief that young toads fall from the clouds with rain.

Clearing the forest, and reaching the open ledges on the crest of the great southeastern ridge of Chocorua, along which the Hammond path runs towards the peak, I saw that a storm was gathering in the west. Piles of thunderheads were rolling up beyond Whiteface and the Sandwich Dome, and tending northward. Chocorua might be too far east to be included in the drenching which was in store. It was not too far away to lose the cool wind which suddenly changed my gasping heat into a shiver. With a quicker pace I pushed towards the foot of the peak.

All but one of the well-marked paths up Chocorua spend too much time in the ravines and woods. It is discouraging to toil mile after mile through uninteresting small growth, without a breath of cool air or a glimpse of distance. The Hammond path cancels nearly half the height of the mountain in the first mile of woodland, and then rewards the climber by successive views which grow more charming as ledge after ledge is passed. While following the top of the slowly rising and scantily wooded ridge, the peak is seen coming nearer and nearer, and growing more and more impressive. Range after range of northern mountains rise above the foreground, and the far horizon widens slowly. When the foot of the peak is finally reached, shutting out for a time all that is grandest in the view, the climber feels that he must scale those forbidding cliffs, whatever becomes of him when the final struggle is over. So I felt as, at about half past six, I gained the top of the mountain's shoulder and looked up at the huge rock which forms its awful head. The eastern side of the peak is so precipitous that few have the temerity even to try to scale it. The southern side is broken into smaller cliffs, between which tufts of spruces grow. In winter this face is quite readily climbed upon the packed snow, but in summer wide sloping ledges polished

by ice make the way difficult and dangerous to the novice. A few score rods to the west, yet still on the southern face of the peak, there is a rift in the cliffs filled with small trees and fragments of rock. This cleft leads straight upwards to a small sandy plateau on the west side of the peak, two thirds of the way to its summit. As I struggled up this almost perpendicular ravine, I heard the steady roar of thunder, and saw above me black clouds surging across the sky. It would have been dark had not the south been filled with silvery light and hazy sunset glory. A black-mouthed cave upon my right offered a refuge. Hedgehogs lived in it, but its outer chamber would be storm-proof. Should I wait? No, storm or no storm, I would gain the peak, and do my part to keep my tryst with the stars.

Stumbling out of the ravine upon the plateau, I faced the north. A picture was there which made the memory of Doré's strongest delineations of Dante's visions seem weak. On my right was an upright wall of black rock, on my left an abyss. Northward, before me, lay that wilderness of forests and peaks which forms the White Mountains, thirty miles square of spruce forests, and all of it on edge, — a sierra forbidding at its best, but now made terrible by a tempest. The higher heavens were filled with

loose, rounded black clouds with white spaces between them. Below them, impending over a belt of country about ten miles north of me, was a very long but narrow cloud, black as ink, with a clean-cut lower edge as straight as a level. From it forked lightning was playing downward. The outlines of the mountains were singularly clear. I could see, beginning at the right, the Presidential Range, the Crawford Notch, Anderson, Nancy, Lowell, the Carrigain Notch, Carrigain; and then, partly obscured by rain, the Franconia Mountains and the nearer heights of Trip pyramid and its neighbors. Just over Trip pyramid, reaching nearly to the zenith, was an opening in the clouds, a narrow space between two storms. It was clear gold within, but hideous black profiles were outlined against it, as though the fiends of one storm were looking across it at their allied hosts in the second bank of clouds now hurrying upward from the southwest.

Turning sharply to the right, I found and climbed the rough path leading up the rocks to the highest point on the peak. Three thousand feet below me, in that peaceful valley by the lake, was my home. I could just see its red roof among the trees. Wind ripples were chasing each other across the lake, marring its white surface. The lake is heart-shaped, and my cot-

tage rests at the tip. No storm impended over those whom I had left behind, but the voice of the thunder reminded me of what was passing to the northward.

Under the long level black cloud, from which zigzag lightning darted downward like a snake's tongue, were three zones of color. The first, nearest the east, and at the head of the storm as it moved forward, was gray. It was formed of scud. The second was black, and from it shot most of the lightning. The third was snowy white shaded by perpendicular lines. This was the rain. Each belt seemed to be two miles or more in width, and the whole was moving about twenty miles an hour. When I reached the peak, Carrigain Notch was just passing under the scud, and as I watched, Lowell, Anderson, and Nancy were in turn obscured. By the time Mount Nancy was covered, Carrigain and its notch were reappearing. Meanwhile, the golden gap in the clouds had closed, and the second storm was approaching. Its course was such as to take in Chocorua, Paugus, and the Swift River intervale which lay just below me on the north. Wild as the first storm made the northern sky, the second one seemed bent upon making the picture even more gloomy. It was the moment of sunset, but the sun was lost in a wilderness of thunder-clouds. Suddenly a sound

clear and sweet came to me. It was the first sound, save thunder and wind, that I had heard since reaching the peak. A long, pure note, followed by one much higher, repeated several times, formed the song of my companion on the heights. It was the farewell to the day of a white-throated sparrow, that sweetest singer of the mountain peaks. A feeling of forlornness which had been creeping over me was dispelled. Let the storm come; I was ready for it.

Not many rods below the peak, on the very verge of the eastern crag, stands an enormous detached rock, roughly cubical in shape, and at least twenty feet in each dimension. This rock, which is known as "the Cow," rests upon a narrow shelf having a saucer-shaped depression about fifteen feet in diameter in its upper surface. The Cow projects slightly beyond the outer edge of the ledge, but at the point where it projects the concavity of the under granite leaves a space exactly eighteen inches in height and several feet long, which admits light into the hollow beneath the Cow. Years before, I had discovered this strange cave, and had found that a projecting corner of rock gave standing-room near enough to the narrow mouth to allow a man to creep into it. To this shelter I determined to take my luggage for safe-keeping during the rain. As I wound my way down the

zigzag path to the cave, a junco flew past me in the gloom and chirped inquiringly. A drop or two of rain fell. Thunder roared in the southwest as well as in the north. The mountains had lost the wonderful dark violet shade which they possessed before the light faded, and were now almost black, those nearest being darkest. As I reached the mouth of the cave, an uncomfortable thought intruded itself upon my mind, — was it possible that bears used the cave? I peered in. The place was empty now, at all events. Pushing in my oilskin coat, jersey, knapsack with lunch, lantern, and star-atlas, I slid in after them. At the deepest part of the depression in the ledge, the space between the rock below and the rock above is thirty inches. I could not sit up straight, but I could recline comfortably at various angles. Lighting my lantern, I unpacked my bag and furnished my lodgings. A watch, match-box, foot rule, thermometer, pencil, a mirror for signaling, compass, hunting-knife, bird whistles, supper, breakfast, and dry underclothing made the cave seem quite homelike. The dry clothing attracted me, for I was wet with perspiration, and my thermometer reminded me that I felt chilly. I listened. Was it raining? No. Taking my lantern, supper, and dry clothes, I wriggled to the entrance and regained the air.



Happy thought: if any bear could get into that cave, it would be a very thin one. Unhappy thought: his thinness would betoken all the greater hunger.

There was a lull in the storm, for although everything above was black, the wind seemed to have died away and the thunder to be very distant. On the narrow ledge between the towering pinnacle and the black abyss below the Cow, I discarded my damp clothes and put on the dry ones. The change was comforting. I was glad when it was accomplished, for I had no inclination to fight a bear in the costume of Mulvaney at the taking of Lungtungpen.

Step by step I crept back up the cliff to the summit. There was wind enough on top, and my lantern had to be thrust into a crack in the rock on the lee side to keep it not only from blowing out, but from blowing away. The top of Chocorua is about the shape and size of a large, wide dining-table. On the south, other levels lead up to it gradually; but west, north, and east this highest rock is bounded by abrupt sides, from which a fall in the night would be a serious matter. Lying down on this dizzy platform, I ate my supper with savage relish, and took new account of the night and its pictures. Except when lightning illumined some part of the horizon, the only things visible to me were



the long black ridge of Paugus, the hump of Passaconaway over Paugus, fragments of white ledges on the northern spurs of Chocorua, and lakes in the valley. Even Ossipee Lake, fifteen miles or more away, was plainly distinguishable as a white spot in the surrounding gloom. Lights shone from many of the cottages near Chocorua Lake, and from Birch intervalle, Albany intervalle, and Conway. They were the connecting link between me and the rest of mankind. In the sky there was absolute blackness, curiously broken once by the sudden appearance of the red planet for the space of a single minute. Sometimes a few drops of rain fell, but the second storm seemed to be reserving most of its strength for a region farther east. It was now nine o'clock, and the first storm had passed far over into Maine, its lightning playing with rapid flashes behind Mount Pequawket. At every flash the sky just behind the pyramidal peak assumed the color of dead gold, while the mountain was embossed upon it like an emblem on a shield. Occasionally the second storm produced lightning, and when it did so the effects were startling, so near was the heavenly fire. One flash was from side to side across a low cloud which hung near Chocorua on the east. It was very vivid, and so complex with its many delicate lines and loops of light

that a fiery sentence appeared to have been written on the sky. Another bolt was broad and straight, and went down into the forest like an arrow. It was so near and so brilliant that for almost a minute I could see nothing. The thunder which followed it began in the zenith, and rolled away, booming and crashing, in three directions, lasting so long that I wished I had timed it, to see for how many seconds its terrific echoes refused to subside. As many of its rumblings and mutterings resounded from the ravines and hillsides below me, the effect of this great peal was unlike any I had ever before heard.

While I was listening to the sighing of the wind-tossed forest in the hollows eastward of the mountain, another sound reached my ears, and made me concentrate my senses in an effort to determine its nature. At the moment I heard it, I was somewhat below the peak, leaning against a wall of rock facing the south. The sound seemed to come from above. It resembled that made by a thin stick or shingle when whirled rapidly in the air. At the same time there was a creaking, and sounds almost like wailing and groaning. A moment later, a slender column of white cloud, a hundred feet or more in height, but proportioned like a human figure, glided past the mountain over the

black abyss below the eastern cliffs. It is needless to say that I was interested in these phenomena. I was much more than interested ; and the fact that I was absolutely alone, in the dark, miles away from home, with a storm howling around me, was brought clearly to my mind. The legend of Chocorua, the Indian for whom this mountain was named, of his curse upon the whites, and of his melancholy death near these eastern cliffs, rose, for some illogical reason, into my memory.

The sounds in the air continued, and at one time made me wonder whether electric waves passing through the low-hanging clouds above me could produce them. There being no light accompanying the sounds, I dismissed this hypothesis as unsatisfactory. Once I thought that something was scratching and grinding down the side of a sloping ledge. Since rain began falling thick and fast at the same moment, I seized my lantern and retreated to the cave. When I gained the dizzy rock at the mouth of the cave, the heavens again spoke, and mist-forms swept past in front of me. The next moment I was at the bottom of the cave, wondering whether a temperature of 60°, which my thermometer recorded, justified wholly the goose-flesh that crept over me.

My lantern cast a clear, steady light into all

parts of the cave. Now and then a flash of lightning showed where the entrance faced the east, and where one or two other cracks were open between the Cow and its rocky foundation. I lay perfectly motionless, pondering upon the strange sounds I had heard. My eyes rested upon several stones lying in the narrow space beyond my feet where the two rocks neared each other. Something moved there. A body had passed from the shelter of one stone to that of another. I held my breath, and watched. Again a brownish thing flashed past an opening, came nearer, darted forward into the light, vanished, reappeared, came clearly into view, shot back, and finally sped across a broad, well-lighted face of rock, and revealed itself as a large short-tailed mouse, — perhaps an Eastern *Phenacomys* as yet unknown to collectors. Although I did not move for a long time, he failed to reappear, and my only companion was a gauzy-winged fly which sat upon my knee and contemplated the flame of the lantern.

The rain continuing, I sang and whistled until after ten o'clock, when I crawled to the mouth of my cave and looked down into the depths beneath. A stone thrown far out, so as to clear the first few ledges, might fall eight hundred feet before it struck the rocks below. As I stared into the darkness, I found that

much which had been invisible an hour earlier was now dimly outlined in black and white. The sky, too, showed gaps in its curtain, and the white lakes in the distant valleys were more silvery than before. The storm was over, the moon was at work eating the clouds, and soon, I hoped, the stars would keep their tryst. Lantern in hand, I crept up the rocks, and settled myself once more on the peak. All my friendly lights in the valley had gone out, and I was now alone in the sky.

Paugus, Passaconaway, and Whiteface were quite clearly outlined against each other and the sky. They seemed very near, however, so that it was easier for me to imagine myself on a lonely rock in the ocean, with huge waves about to overwhelm me, than to make those combing waves stand back three, eight, twelve miles and become spruce-covered mountains. Gradually other mountain outlines became discernible, and the cloud-curtain above showed folds and wrinkles, which in time wore out under the moon's chafing and let through a glimpse of Mars or Vega, marvelously far away in that serene ether. Half an hour before midnight the pale disk of the moon appeared through the thin clouds, and at the witching hour she sailed out proudly into a little space of clear blue-black heaven. The wind came in fresher puffs, a snowy cloud-cap

rested on the head of Paugus, and the air was so much colder that I was glad to put on both jersey and oilskin jacket. A dozen lakes and twenty-five mountain peaks were visible at half past twelve, and Mars had worked a place for his red eye, so that it could look down through the breaking clouds without interruption. Drowsiness now overtook me, and in order to keep awake I was forced to walk rapidly up and down the small area of the top, or to jump about over the ledges farther south. About one o'clock a light flashed brightly from a point near the Maine line; perhaps in Fryeburg. At first I thought it might be a fire which would gather strength and size; then, as it appeared to move and come nearer, it looked more like the headlight of a locomotive. My glass made it seem smaller, and the motion was so slow and irregular that I thought the gleam might be from a doctor's buggy, as the man of sickness took his way through the night.

My own light was now growing dim, so I extinguished it in order to save the remaining oil for emergencies. Immediately afterwards a bat flew against the lantern, and then perched upon a lichen-hung rock near by, to recover his composure. The moon slowly made way with the clouds, and by two o'clock a quarter part of the sky was clear. The mercury had dropped

to 52°, and the moisture hurled against the mountain by the wind was condensed and sent boiling and seething up the sides of the peak. Tongues of fog lapped around me with the same spasmodic motion which flames display in rising from a plate of burning alcohol. At first they scarcely reached the peak; then they came to my feet, and swept past me around both sides of my platform; finally they flung themselves higher and higher, hiding not only the black valley from which they came, but Paugus and more distant peaks, the sky, the moon, and the glimmering stars. Suddenly from the fog-filled air came once more the gruesome sound which I had heard earlier in the night. Its cause was nearer to me now, and I felt sure that it was some creature of the air, and consequently nothing which could cause me inconvenience. I strained my eyes to see the creature as it passed, but in vain, until in its flight it chanced to cross the face of the moon. Then the mystery was solved. I saw that it was either a night-hawk or a bird of similar size. The speed at which it was flying was wonderful. When it tacked or veered, it produced the extraordinary sounds which, with their echoes from the rocks, had so puzzled me at first. Once or twice during the night I had heard night-hawks squawking, and from this time on their harsh voices were heard



at intervals mingled with the booming which, for some unexplained reason, they make by night as well as by day; after as well as during the breeding season.

A few minutes after two o'clock a large meteor shot across a small patch of clear sky near the constellation Andromeda, and was quenched in the fog. From time to time other smaller ones flashed in brief glory in the same quarter of the heavens, and one brilliant fragment burned its way past Jupiter, as though measuring its passing glory with the light of the planet. The wind was falling, the temperature rising, and, following these two influences, the fog decreased, until its only remnants clung to the ponds and rivers far below. Two thirds of the sky were clear by three o'clock. In the east, the Pleiades sparkled in mysterious consultation; farther north, Capella flashed her colored lights, and Venus, radiant with a lustre second only to Selene's own, threw off the clouds which for an hour had concealed her loveliness, and claimed from Mars the foremost place in the triumph of the night. Her reign was short. At a quarter after three I noticed that the cloud-bank which lay along the eastern and northern horizon was becoming more sharply defined by the gradual growth of a white band above it. A greater orb than Venus was undermining her



power in the east. The white line imperceptibly turned to a delicate green, and extended its area to left and right and upward. The clouds in the high sky took on harder outlines and rounder shapes. Shadows were being cast among them, and a light was stealing through them from something brighter even than the yellow moon. The pale green band had changed to blue, the blue was deepening to violet, and through this violet sky the brightest meteor of the night passed slowly down until it met the hills. High in the sky the stars were growing dim, and the spaces between the clouds, which looked for all the world like a badly painted picture, were growing blue, deep real blue. The line of brightest light above the eastern clouds showed a margin of orange. Venus in the violet sky was still dazzling, but her glory was no longer of the night, but of the twilight. She was wonderful, in spite of the stronger light which was slowly overpowering her. Mars burned like a red coal low down in the west, unaffected thus far by the sun's rays, while Jupiter, supreme among the high stars, was paling fast as the light of day rolled towards him.

The eastern sky looked strangely flat. Its colors were like a pastel drawing. Small, very black clouds, with hard outlines, lay unrelieved

against the violet, silver, and orange. A full hour had sped by since I first noted the coming of the day, and still the earth below slept on. Hark ! up from the deep valley below the Cow comes a single bird-voice, but scarcely are its notes sprinkled upon the cool, clear air, when a dozen, yes, fifty singers join their voices in a medley of morning music. The first songster was a white-throat, and the bulk of the chorus was made up of juncos and white-throats, the stronger song of Swainson's and hermit thrushes coming in clearly now and then from points more distant from the peak. There was ecstasy in those matins. No sleepy choir of mortal men or women ever raised such honest, buoyant music in honor of the day's coming. The birds love the day, and they love life for all that each day brings. They labor singing, and they sing their vespers, as they sing their matins, with hearts overflowing with joy and thanksgiving.

There is something inexpressibly touching and inspiring in the combination of fading night, with its planets still glowing, and the bird's song of welcome to the day. Night is more eloquent than day in telling of the wonders of the vast creation. Day tells less of distance, more of detail; less of peace, more of contest; less of immortality, more of the perishable. The sun, with its dazzling light and burning heat,

hides from us the stars, and those still depths as yet without stars. It narrows our limit of vision, and at the same time hurries us and worries us with our own tasks which we will not take cheerfully, and the tasks of others which are done so ill. Night tells not only of repose on earth, but of life in that far heaven where every star is a thing of motion and a creation full of mystery. Men who live only in great cities may be pitied for being atheists, for they see little beyond the impurity of man; but it seems incredible that a being with thoughts above appetite, and imagination above lust, should live through a night in the wilderness, with the stars to tell him of space, the dark depths of the sky to tell him of infinity, and his own mind to tell him of individuality, and yet doubt that some Being more powerful and less fickle than himself is in this universe. The bird-music coming before the night is ended combines the purest and most joyous element of the day with the deep meaning of the night. The birds bear witness to the ability of life to love its surroundings and to be happy. The night bears witness to the eternity of life and to the harmony of its laws.

## BRINGING HOME THE BEAR.

THE horn of Chocorua rose into a sky full of threatening colors and shadows. Its own coloring was sinister, its outlines vague, its height apparently greater than usual. Low, growling thunder came from its ledges and ravines. The forest at its feet, which ended at my door, was silent; no whisper swept through its waiting leaves. In the west as in the north, cloud masses were boiling up into the sky, covering the blue with white, gray, and black, through which now and then shot a ray of gold from the protesting sun. A tempest seemed brewing as a not unwelcome close of a mid-August day.

A tall man emerged from the woods and came striding towards me across the grass. A rifle swung to and fro in his right hand as he walked. It was a repeating rifle, one of those inclusive successors of the fowling-piece, shot-pouch, powder-flask, cap-box, and wad-pocket of this tall man's boyhood. The stride ended at my side, and the tall man and I spoke of the heat, the drought, and the approaching storm. Just as he was preparing to lope onwards down the ribbon road through the birches, I said: —

"I hear Merrill caught a bear Saturday, and brought it out at Piper's."

"That so? How big was it?"

"A small one, a two-year-old, probably. It was in one of his traps and he shot it."

"Well, I've kept up with him this time. I shot one less than an hour ago, and he warn't in any trap, either."

I looked at the man wonderingly. There had been no unusual spark in his eye, flush on his bronzed cheek, or spring in his heavy step. He had not boasted, or even spoken of his achievement until I touched his pride by my tale of his rival's success. Would he have gone home without telling me? I think so. Yet this meeting with a bear, alone, on the high ledges of Chocorua, had been one of the joys of this man's life. Many a weary hour had he carried his magazine rifle over the ledges, treading softly, keeping eye and ear alert, hoping to see Bruin on his feeding-ground. A year before he had trapped and killed some of the great creatures; but shooting a beast caught in a forty-pound steel trap is tame sport compared with facing a free bear on the open ledges.

Before the hunter left me, we had arranged that soon after sunrise on the following morning he was to pass through my dooryard on his way to the spot where, under those black clouds, poor Bruin was lying dead.

The rage around Chocorua deepened. Boom, boom, of thunder rolled downward from the heights of storm. The peak was swept by masses of rain. Flash after flash lit up the darkening sky behind the grim mountain. Still the nearer forests lay at rest, waiting. Then a golden rift came in the western cloud-bank. One half of the storm rolled past us on the south, drenching Ossipee and Wolfborough, the other half on the north, soaking Conway and Fryeburg; we alone were dry.

The morning of the 13th of August was breathlessly hot. Even the hermit thrushes forgot to sing. A rattle of wheels brought me from breakfast to join the party organized to bring home the bear. A strong, sure-footed horse was drawing a farm wagon which had been the stand-by of an earlier generation, and which, therefore, was made of solid stuff. My tall friend and two of his hunting satellites were in it, and around them were strewn rifle, hatchet, ropes, empty grain-bags, and other apparatus to be used in bringing the dead brute down the mountain. My master of the horse, an alert and muscular Prince Edward Islander, stood by ready to march, so the word was given, and we five, some walking, some in the ancient wagon, started for the mountain.

For a quarter of a mile the road was good,

winding through my pasture and belts of white birches. Then we turned from it and plowed through beds of brake and blackberry bushes dripping and glistening with dew. We might as well have waded waist deep in the lake, which would have been warmer though no more wet than that dew-deluged tangle. Next came a ravine filled with spruces, over which towered two immense canoe birches, at whose feet a cold spring bubbled in a sandy pool. The horse wound in and out among the trees, shaking from them showers of cold dew-drops. Small saplings and bushes bowed before the wagon and passed under its axles; large ones were bent away by strong hands, or hacked down. Sometimes the wheels locked against tree-trunks, bringing the horse to a sudden standstill, and almost throwing the passengers to the ground; and sometimes they sank into unseen hollows filled to the brim with ferns, making the wagon careen so that all its contents slid, or struggled not to slide, against its sinking side.

Beyond the ravine and its dripping spruces was a narrow sunny valley pointing straight towards the mountain. Up this valley our party continued its course, the sun drying the dew from our clothes, and flashing many colors in the drops still clinging to brakes and grasses. Fifteen hundred feet above us towered the West

Ledges, on which the bear had been shot. As one looks at Chocorua from the south, its peak seems to rest upon the shoulders of two converging ridges, one sloping upward towards it from the southeast, and one from the southwest. Between the two ridges the soft forest drapery of the mountain falls in graceful folds and curves to the level of the lake. We were in one of these folds, climbing towards the steep inner side of the western ridge. On each side of us lofty trees clung to the slopes of the valley. Owls hoot in these woods after twilight and at dawn. Great boulders lie in confusion in the perpetual shadows of the trees, and in the caverns between and under them are dens of porcupines, foxes, and skunks.

Not until we reached the torrent at the foot of the west ridge was the wagon abandoned and the horse tethered. The forest at this point consists mainly of poplars, birches, and oaks. The bear-slayer led the way through them, and his more muscular satellite followed at his heels, cutting saplings in order to form a path for our descent with the bear. After climbing several hundred feet, we rested. A loud humming filled the air, yet no bees were to be seen. They appeared to be in the higher foliage, attracted by something on the leaves. We examined the lower branches, and then the leaves



of low shrubs and plants. They seemed to be covered with dew, but the dew was sticky and proved to be sweet to the taste. As we continued our walk we found that the entire side of the mountain had been sprinkled with heavenly sweetness of the same kind.

The roar of bees had become familiar to our ears. The bear-slayer was bending down a slender beech for the satellite to cut, when suddenly he uttered a cry and sprang backward. "Run, run," he shouted, and in a moment the Islander and the small satellite were bounding down the mountain-side like chamois. The larger satellite became a football under the bear-slayer's feet, and I, hearing a second cry of "hornets!" plunged headforemost into the bushes and crawled away under the brakes, thus avoiding both the hornets and the necessity of re-climbing lost ground. The bear-slayer's retreat was marked by repeated howls of pain which lent further speed to the flying heels of the rear-guard. It was some time before the ignominious stampede was checked and a fresh ascent begun. The bear-slayer had been stung in three places, and the larger satellite declared he had saved himself from a sting by pulling the hornet off his back with his fingers.

Standing among the young trees of the forest were many gray stumps of ancient origin, —

decayed relics of forest gentry now displaced by the democracy of poplars and birches. These stumps bore no axe marks; they had fallen at the command of the tornado, not of the lumber thief. On their sides were long scratches which looked like claw marks. Had "Sis Wildcat" been trying her claws there? No; but "Brer Bar" had been. Near by was a small grove of oaks, not one of which was more than a foot in diameter. Their sides were deeply scored by Bruin's claws, and their highest branches hung down upon the rest of their limbs, broken and dying. There is hardly an oak on Chocorua which has not been climbed by bears in acorn time, and disfigured by the great brutes in their attempts to reach the coveted nuts.

Towering close above the oaks we could see the abrupt faces of the West Ledges. We seemed to be at the foot of a great feudal castle whose gray walls needed scaling ladders to be conquered. Ferns grew in the crevices in the rock; tiny streams of water trickled down its sides and fed mosses and lichens; honeysuckle, mountain ash, wild Solomon's seal, and striped maple sprang in luxuriant tangles from its feet, and tripped us as we skirted the castle's base and sought a break in its smooth walls. Presently we found one, — a rift made originally by

ice, but long since widened and deepened by other erosive forces. Clinging to tree-trunks or the tough stems of blueberry bushes, we pulled ourselves up the steep ravine and reached the top of the first ledge. The mountain was still unconquered before us, but turning we saw, sunlit and smiling, the world we had left. Curving, undulating forest; warm spots of open pasture; the Hammond farm, from which one of the principal paths starts up Chocorua; my own red-roofed cottage with squares of flax, millet, corn, and buckwheat giving patchwork colors to its clearing; Chocorua ponds and the cottages on Nickerson's hill, and then the wider world of forest, mountain, river, and lake, — Ossipee, Sandwich Dome, Bearcamp, Winnepesaukee, — blended beauties whose names awaken pleasant memories and whose picture is a joy to look upon, — all these things we saw, and much more which we only half thought about, so eager were we to go on with our quest.

Climbing ledge after ledge, wading through thickets of mountain ash, dogwood, low spruce and blueberry bushes, we gained at last the highest open point on West Ridge. On three sides the land fell away abruptly. On the north the ridge, heavily grown with stunted spruce and poplars, continued toward the peak.

It did not go straight towards that proud rock, but sought it by bending westward and then northward in a great bow. The peak, consequently, stood the other side of a vast hollow filled with tangled forest. It was near, and yet appeared unattainable. I thought of the winter day when I had climbed to this point over four feet of packed and frozen snow and seen the Chocorua horn, crusted with ice and flanked by mighty snowdrifts, hanging in the bright blue sky. Then, stimulated by the keen air, I had plunged into the hollow, crossed it, scaled its farther side on hands and knees, gained the foot of the peak, and finally won its slippery summit, no larger than my dining table; and lying there half freezing, had seen the snow-covered world from Casco Bay to the Green Mountains; Monadnock to Dixville Notch. The sun of August did not encourage such exploits, and a dead bear lying hidden near us drew our thoughts away from the heights to the damp thicket close below.

The bear-slayer was telling his story: "I was coming along here, sort of softly, thinking it was just the kind of place for a bear, when just as I got to this open ledge I heard a hustling round in that snarl of bushes. I stopped short and listened and peeped in. There was something black and hairy rubbing round in the

blueberry bushes, — you can see how thick the berries are in there. Well, I thought, I must be careful; there are lots of folks berrying, and I should hate to put one of these pills into a woman picking blueberries. It would settle her right off. So I peeked round, till I was dead sure it was a bear, and then I let drive — at what I could see. The ball hit him in his side not far back of his shoulder, and he gave an awful roar and started out this way. I climbed up on this big boulder, five feet out of harm's way, and waited. He was letting out roars and then drawing awful deep breaths. You could hear those gasps a mile. I could not see him, he was in so thick in the bushes. But then he began to drag himself off towards old Coroway and I started after him. I heard him go ker-chunk down this ledge, and then I caught sight of his head and let him have another, and a third ball, but they didn't seem to stop him a bit, just glanced off his skull, I s'pose. Well, he got down 'most a hundred feet before I could get a sight at his side again, but when I did, I put one in where it stopped his gasping and kicking."

During this narrative we had followed the hunter through the network of trees, bushes, and brambles, tracing the track made by the bear in his agony. Branches were broken,

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leaves crushed, moss stained, and rocks torn up. As we descended the north slope towards the dark ravine which the bear had sought, the sunlight grew dim and the air cold. Suddenly I saw the bear. At the foot of a slippery ledge, over which hung dripping wet moss, lying upon a deep bed of sphagnum, was a gaunt black form. Dead and still as it was, it sent a thrill through me. I seemed to see the being for whom this wild region had been created. The horn-blowing, pistol-firing, peanut-eating tourist is out of place in the rugged ravines of Chocorua. Even the bronzed, gray-shirted native with his magazine rifle is not in tune with the solemn music of this wilderness. But in the dead creature on the moss I saw the real owner of forest and ledge, mountain pool and hidden lake. He looked weary and worn, as though life had been full of hunger and terror. The small, keen, wicked eyes were closed; the cruel teeth were locked tight, the broad feet were cut by his last struggles on the ledges, and his thin hair, showing the hide below it, was flecked with blood which had oozed from four bullet wounds.

We five men gathered around the dead bear and looked at him, felt of him, counted his nails, tried to open his set jaws, guessed at his weight, discussed his character, wondered at his

ability to maintain life in such a region, and marveled especially at the nature of his kind to bring forth young in late winter and to rear them in the chill and foodless months of February and March. With great interest we sought through his capacious stomach to see what he had eaten, and found quarts of ripe blueberries, scarlet cherries, and what we at first took to be grubs dug from decaying stumps. Closer examination showed that Bruin had swallowed the whole of a hornet's nest, for the perfect insects, hundreds of their undeveloped young in the brood-cells, and the gray, papery nest were all recognized. This bear certainly knew how to pick ripe blueberries and not to pick green ones. I saw but one green berry in the quarts which he had gathered.

Drawing the bear's fore and hind feet on each side together, the hunter strapped them firmly. He next tied the head to the feet, so that it should not drag, and then passed two maple poles through the loops made by the two pairs of lashed feet, and called upon the larger satellite and the Islander to shoulder their burden. They did so, and the homeward march began, the bearers groaning. Possibly a hundred yards had been traversed before the Islander tripped and fell, pulling the bear down upon his prostrate form, and receiving also the

weight of the heavy satellite. The hunter took his place under the poles, and fifty yards more were gained. Then the hunter, with a resounding exclamation, flung down the poles and whipped out his hunting-knife. With difficulty he was dissuaded from skinning and quartering Bruin on the spot. The plan which induced him to stay his hand was suggested by one of the party who had read of what he called an "Indian wagon." Under his direction two long poles were cut and the bear was lashed on top of them near their heavy ends. The satellites then stood between the light ends, as horses stand between the shafts, and began dragging the bear down the steep side of the mountain. They had not gone fifty feet before the weight of the bear turned the poles over and left the satellites sprawling in the bushes. Once more knives were drawn and skinning threatened.

The next proposal was to wrap Bruin in grain bags so as to protect his skin, and then to drag and roll him down to where traveling would be easier. The bear slayer consented to try this experiment, and two large shorts bags were drawn over the body, one from its head, the other from its tail. Other bags were laid under the body, and, thus protected, it was dragged, bumping and rolling, down several hundred yards to the foot of the ledges. Short cross-sticks were then



inserted in the lashings, which were tied round the bear's legs, and four of us, two on each side, or two in front and two behind, raised the body by these sticks and bore it through the winding path we had cleared while ascending. The lesser satellite, carrying the rifle, hatchet, and other luggage, brought up the rear, and urged on the party by jeering remarks and snatches of song. In spite of repeated cautions from the bear-slayer, whose stings still smarted, we narrowly escaped walking into the hornet's nest a second time.

More than six hours had elapsed since our departure from home when our little procession wound out of the woods into my dooryard. Raspberry vinegar never was more gratefully swallowed, and never was dead emperor received with more respect than poor Bruin by the crowds which flocked to view his remains during the afternoon of that hot August day. One bought his nails, another his teeth, a third his thinly haired skin, while pieces of his flesh, prepared for future cooking, were carried away in various directions. As when sugar is spilled upon the ground, ants come from every quarter to gather up the grains and draw them away, so dead Bruin drew gossips and idlers from all parts of the town, eager to pick up bits of his body or stories of his melancholy end.

## THE DEAD TREE'S DAY.

It is the theory that there are always plenty of hens to be bought in a New England farming town; but as a matter of fact, in the month of July, 1892, the country north of Bearcamp presented such a dearth of hens that, after traveling miles in my efforts to buy some, I returned to my own neighborhood and hired a contingent for the season. The transaction was unique, but, on the whole, mutually satisfactory. It had one drawback. When one owns fowls, the accumulation of family wrath against the rooster on account of too early crowing on his part always finds relief in eating him; but when one hires a rooster, his life is charmed by contract, and he can with impunity crow the family into nervous prostration. The magnificent Black Spanish cock hired by me began crowing, on the morning of August 21, at twenty minutes of four. Not a ray of daylight pierced the bank of mist which filled the east. Nothing but instinct or a bad conscience could have told Murillo that it was time to crow. Nevertheless, on this occasion his

song was welcome, for I had counted upon his arousing me early in order that I might spend an entire day with the Dead Tree.

On the northern shore of Chocorua Lake a broad reach of swampy woodland is broken by a meadow. At the point where the small and very cool brook which bounds the meadow on the west enters the lake, a tall pine once cast its shadow upon a deep pool at its foot. The pine died many years ago, and its bark has been entirely removed by weather and woodpeckers, leaving its trunk and eighty-seven branches, or stumps of branches, as white as bleached bones. A few rods farther from the mouth of the brook stands a smaller pine of similar character. These two trees form a famous bird roost, and at their feet I planned to stay from sunrise to sunset on this August day, in order to see, during consecutive hours, how many birds would make use of the tree as a perch. From frequent visits during this and earlier years, I knew that the tree was not only a rendezvous for the birds living in the meadow and adjoining woods, but also a *kursaal* for tourists in feathers, and for all birds coming to the lake to hunt or to fish.

As I left the house, hermit thrushes were uttering the short complaining notes of alarm characteristic of them at twilight. Dark as it

was, they were awake and stirring. Reaching the bank of the lake a minute or two after four, I startled a spotted sandpiper from the beach, and heard his peeping whistle as he flew from me across the black water, beyond which only dusky masses of gloom marked the pine woods on the farther shore. The surface of the water was disturbed by thousands of insects cutting queer figures upon it. Where they moved, white ripples followed. As I walked along the moist sand of the beach, pickerel shot out from the shore, bats squeaked, and frogs jumped into deeper water with nervous croaks of fear. Then a whippoorwill sang, and as his weird notes echoed from the woods, Venus sailed clear from the mist bank and reflected her dazzling beauty in the lake. As I drew near the mouth of the brook, a solitary tattler ran along the sand in front of me, whistling softly. When I turned into the bushes, he stopped and resumed his search for breakfast.

The dead tree rose above me, jet black against the dark sky. Stepping softly through the bushes, I disturbed the wary catbirds, and their fretful cries awoke the meadow. At twenty minutes past four, three whippoorwills were singing, and two catbirds, with several hermit thrushes, were complaining. A few moments later, the call of a veery was heard, a

song sparrow gave a sharp squeak, and then, so still was the air, I heard the heavy stamping of my horse in his stable, a quarter of a mile away, as he gained his feet after a long night's rest. The stars were growing paler moment by moment, and outlines becoming sharper in the bushes and trees near me. A Swainson's thrush uttered its clear "*quick*," expressive of much more vigilance than the cries of the veery and the hermit, yet less fault-finding than the mew of the catbird.

I settled myself comfortably amid the bushes eastward of the dead trees, near enough to them to see even a humming-bird if one alighted on the bare branches. At 4.35 I had heard eight kinds of birds, yet the crows, notorious for early rising, had not spoken. A minute later one cawed sleepily among the eastern pines where the mist lay thickest, and soon a dozen voices responded. Dense as was the fog, the light of day made swift inroads upon the shadows, and when, about quarter to five, a young chestnut-sided warbler came out of a dewy bush near me, its colors were plainly distinguishable. The little bird looked sleepy and dull. It moved languidly, and so did three Maryland yellow-throats which appeared from the same clump of thick bushes a moment later. As yet no bird of the day had sung.

Far away in the swampy woods to the north a big red-shouldered hawk cried "*ky-e, ky-e, ky-e.*" I remembered the morning, just a year previous, when, sitting in about the same spot, with Puffy perched on a dead limb over my head, a red-shouldered hawk had flown with stately wing-beat to one of the lower branches of the dead tree, and then, suddenly discovering the owl, had thrust its head forward, opened wide its beak, and, with its fierce eyes glaring, had shrieked its hatred at the almost unmoved owl. This morning it did not visit the meadow, probably finding its humble game nearer home.

The first bird to appear flying above the level of the meadow was a graceful night-hawk. Perhaps he had just come down from a night's revel in the cool air over Chocorua's summit. I wondered whether he had been one of a company of between two and three hundred of his tribe which deployed across the sky on the afternoon of the 19th, just in advance of a violent thunderstorm. Yearly, about the 20th of August, the night-hawks muster their forces and parade during one or two afternoons. Yet there seems to be no diminution in the number of the local birds after the army disappears. Perhaps it is formed of migrants from the north; or perhaps the display is, after all, only a drill, preparatory to a later flight.

The Maryland yellow-throats, in moving about the bushes, discovered me, and began scolding at my intrusion. They came so near to me that they seemed within reach of my hands. I kept perfectly still, and half closed my eyes. Their inspection seemed to convince them that I was harmless, for they went away, and presently the male sang his "*rig-a-jig, rig-a-jig, rig-a-jig*," close behind me. I am convinced that closing the eyes does a great deal to reassure a timid bird. Owls entirely cloak their evil appearance by simply drawing their eyelids down, and closing their feathers tightly about them. On discovering a man, birds watch, not his legs or his body, but his face, and his eyes are the most conspicuous part of his face and fullest of menace. I have sometimes fancied that nervous birds knew when they were watched, even though they could not see the observer.

At 4.48 a kingbird came sailing and fluttering over the meadow, its chattering cries giving ample warning of its approach. It lighted in the big tree, and scanned sky, water, and grass, searching for something with which to quarrel. A flicker passed silently, coming, as the kingbird had, from the woods, and going to a tree near the lake shore. Small birds, possibly warblers, flew by, westward. A blue jay screamed

harshly in the edge of the woods, but the fog, which was growing more and more dense upon the meadow, discouraged its coming to the dead trees. Just at five o'clock a goldfinch undulated past, and the noisy rattle of a kingfisher echoed along the edge of the pond, provoking answers from a red squirrel, whose chatter seemed an imitation of the call, and from a crow, whose mimicry of the fisher's rattle was remarkably good. Probably all bird-calls originated in the efforts of their makers to reproduce sounds which pleased or startled them. In this case, Chickaree and *Corvus* had no sober motive for replying to the kingfisher; they may neither of them have associated the rattle with the blue projectile which made it. Both were entertained or attracted by the sound, and each in its way tried to reproduce it. It is by a similar process, doubtless, that parrots, crows, and blue jays acquire the power of producing sounds which correspond to our words. Later, they may gain, through experience, a knowledge of the meaning or force of such words, but often no such knowledge lies behind the empty iteration of the parrot.

For nearly a quarter of an hour there seemed to be a lull in the process of bird-awakening. The Maryland yellow-throats were moving, and now and then the male sang a little. Crows



called in the distance, and the catbirds moved restlessly about from one part of the meadow to another, mewing, but nothing new appeared under the fog mantle. The spell was broken by the appearance of one of the small tyrant flycatchers, which are so difficult to identify during the migrations unless they are killed and closely examined. This one seemed to me to be a least flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*), there being almost no trace of yellow in his coloring. He flew from point to point, in or just over the bushes, catching small insects with vicious snaps of his beak. Apparently it was necessary, for the proper working of his machinery, to have his tail jerk spitefully several times a minute.

About half past five three crows came to the big tree. One of them sailed softly by, but the other two alighted and began cawing in a fretful way. They were bedraggled with fog and dew, and their tones told of hunger and discomfort. When they spoke, they thrust their heads far forward, giving them a low, mean air. They pulled viciously at their moist clothing, all the while keeping the keenest watch of their surroundings and the distance. Suddenly one of them saw me, and with a low croak flew away, his mate following. Again silence and fog prevailed. A cedar-bird, alighting on the tip of the old tree, seemed to shiver. He remained

in the dim upper air but a moment, taking a headlong plunge into the shrubbery below. I thought even the frogs resented the slow-moving vapors, for they croaked and splashed restlessly.

A red-eyed vireo began his sermon at 6.10, and soon after, blue sky and scattering rays of sunlight appeared. Then the birds became more cheerful, and catbirds, crows, kingbirds, Maryland yellow-throats, and song sparrows vied with each other in activity and noise. Every one of them was intent upon making a good breakfast. The catbirds ate viburnum berries; the crows marched upon the lake sand, searching for the waste of the waves; a barn swallow, the kingbirds, and several smaller flycatchers hovered or darted in pursuit of insects, and the sparrows gathered their harvest from the earth. Then a flicker appeared in the top of the old tree, and, finding a resonant spot in the trunk, beat his reveille softly upon it. My neck fairly ached when I tried to imagine the mental and muscular effort required of the bird to produce such regular and rapid action with his beak. The only way in which a man can make as many beats to the minute with any regularity is by allowing his hand to rest in such a position that it will tremble. Then, by grasping a pencil and resting its tip upon a board, a

sound somewhat similar to the rolling reverberation of the woodpecker's drumming can be produced.

At half past six an olive-sided flycatcher came to the pine, but on seeing the kingbird disappeared. A moment later the kingbird flew away, and the olive-sided at once returned to the highest branch of the tree, and made it his point of rest during a long series of sallies after insects. When he caught one of large size, he brought it back to his perch, and pounded it violently against the branch until its struggles ceased, and its harder portions were, presumably, reduced to a jelly. The kingbirds really have more right than any of the migrants to use the old tree, for they have built, year after year, time out of mind, in the spreading branches of the nearest living pine overhanging the lake. As August advances, however, they wander a good deal, paying visits to my orchard and other good feeding-grounds near the lake. While they are away, wood pewees and phœbes, olive-sided and least flycatchers, visit the vicinity, and enjoy the great tree and the fine chances which it offers of seeing insects over both land and water. About quarter to seven a solitary sandpiper flew swiftly over the meadow, calling. It made two great circles, rising above the trees, and then flew westward so fast that I looked to

discover a pursuer, but could discern none. In the high woods, over which it flew, the crows were chortling. Northward the peak was clear, although below it a long scarf of mist trailed over the forest, moving westward. In the tree-top the flicker "flickered," and then drummed; called again, and drummed more emphatically. Soon a second woodpecker appeared, but flew by into the woods. The first one watched him, and then drummed again, whereupon the newcomer flew to him, and an animated dialogue took place, the second bird apparently having much to say in an excited manner. After they had finished their conference, the second bird flew away, and the first relapsed into a reverie. It lasted only a few moments, for shortly before seven o'clock two crows flew into the two dead trees, and the woodpecker hurried away. Each crow took the topmost perch on his tree, and began his toilet. Just then a frog jumped with a splash into the pool in front of me, and the crows, hearing the noise, looked searchingly down, saw me, and flew off without a caw.

For several years the morning of the 21st of August has been my time for first seeing Wilson's blackcap warblers on their autumn journey southward. Having been in the swamp three hours without seeing one, I began to think that, 1892 being leap year, the pretty

migrants might not keep their tryst; but I wronged them, for just at seven o'clock I heard a sharp "*cheep*" behind me, and, turning slowly, found a blackcap gazing at me nervously. No sooner had my eyes met his than he darted away.

Between seven and eight the trees were occupied by a flock of twelve cedar-birds, one or two flickers, several young robins, a pewee, a humming-bird, and some of the small flycatchers. The humming-bird is a tyrannical and blustering little bird, giving himself many airs. His wife is quite as much of a virago as he is of a bully. In this instance she was determined to drive away the flycatchers. Sitting in the big tree, and looking smaller than a well-fed dragonfly, she darted, every now and then, at one of the chebecs, and put him to flight. They tired her out, however, and after a while she gave up the struggle and departed. About 7.30 a flock of small birds, including several chickadees, appeared in the edge of the woods and scattered over the meadow. Few of them came near enough to me for identification, but there seemed to be vireos and warblers among them. Their coming aroused other birds, and a goldfinch, a catbird chasing a veery, one or two Maryland yellow-throats, and a swift were in sight at one time.

Thirst overtook me at eight, after four hours

of watching, and I crept softly down to the brook. Before I had gone a dozen steps, a huge bird sprang from the sedgy growth by the lake shore and rose into the air. It was a blue heron which had been patrolling the sand within forty feet of me. He flew along the shore for some distance, then rose and passed over the trees towards the north, seeking, no doubt, my lonely lake, half a mile away in the forest. One morning, when hidden in the alders and viburnums which grow at the very foot of the big tree, I heard a queer guttural call or grunt from the meadow, and the next moment the heron stood above me, on the lowest limb of the pine. He looked sharply over the meadow and the lake, stretched first one leg, then the other, then each wing in turn, and finally fell to preening his blue and gray plumes. Against a pale blue sky or ruffled water which mingles blue and gray with bits of white, he is marvelously well protected by his coloring. No wonder that the poor frogs fall a prey to his patient spearing. I kept breathlessly still, and watched this largest of our Chocorua birds. It seemed odd that the old tree should be a perch for him and for the humming-bird. The hummer is three and a quarter inches long; the heron spreads six feet with his great wings when he flies, and measures over four feet when standing. After

a while I grew weary of watching the heron, and of wondering at his macaroni-like legs and his strangely concentrated stare, which now and then fixed itself on my hiding-place, so I whistled softly. The heron paused in his feather-combing and looked towards me. There was no fear in his glance, only mild interest. I sang, first sad music, then "Nancy Lee," "Pinafore," "Hold the Fort," everything I could think of, in fact, which might prompt him to action; but he only stared, now over his beak, then under it. The latter method of ogling was very effective, for the long bill was contemplating the skies, while the cold, calculating eyes stood out each side of its base and glared down across it until I seemed to feel their clamminess. From music I turned to animal language, and barked, mewed, moored, brayed, whinnied, quacked, crowed, cackled, peeped, hooted, and cawed, until my throat was raw. He was clearly entertained, and showed no desire to leave me. At last I came down to plain English, supposing that my voice undisguised by song would certainly alarm him, but to my great surprise he apparently did not associate the human voice with its owner in the slightest degree. In fact, he now seemed bored by my noise, and went on with his preening. Suddenly, in moving my foot, I snapped a small twig. Before there



seemed to have been time for the sound to reach his brain, the heron was on the wing, and I saw him no more that day.

At 8.30, as I was watching the big tree, a large, light-colored bird passed close to its trunk and plunged downward towards the deep pool at its foot. The sound of splashing water was followed by utter silence. After remaining motionless for several minutes I crawled carefully towards the bank of the brook. The bushes were thick, and small dry twigs covered the ground. Their snapping could not be avoided, and just before I reached a point where I could see the water and the narrow strip of muddy beach, a heavy bird rose with a great beating of wings and flew up-stream. I broke through the cover, headlong, but the bird was out of sight. The surface of the stream was covered with small, soft feathers, which I gathered together and dried. They appeared to be from the breast of a sandpiper. Who the murderer was will never be known, though I presume that it was a Cooper's hawk.

My glimpse of this hawk, if such it was, reminded me of an encounter between a sharp-shinned hawk and a flock of blue jays which I had seen at the tree the week previous. The hawk arrived when several flickers were in the tree and hurled himself upon them. They fled,



calling wildly, and brought to their aid, first a kingbird, which promptly attacked the hawk from above, and then a flock of blue jays, which abused him from cover below. When the kingbird flew away, as he did after driving the hawk into the bushes for a few moments, the jays grew more and more daring in approaching the hawk. In fact they set themselves to the task of tiring him out and making him ridiculous. They ran great risks in doing it, frequently flying almost into the hawk's face; but they persevered, in spite of his ferocious attempts to strike them. After nearly an hour the hawk grew weary and edged off to the woods. Then the jays went up the tree as though it were a circular staircase, and yelled the news of the victory to the swamp.

As the forenoon passed slowly by, there were periods when the tree was empty for ten minutes or more at a time, but generally a flicker, cedar-bird, olive-sided flycatcher, blue jay, crow, or catbird was to be seen perched in some part of the great skeleton. At ten o'clock I shifted my place to avoid the heat of the sun, and to keep its light behind me. My new seat was in the heart of a tangle of bushes, and as I looked through the network of their stems I suddenly saw a bird's head, motionless. My glass aided me in recognizing the little creature

as a red-eyed vireo sitting upon a twig. Close by it was a second vireo also perfectly passive. I watched them for a long time, and could see nothing but their eyes move. It is such moods as this, taking possession of birds, which make some parts of the day silent, and cause the woods to seem deserted by all their feathered tenants. Another occupant of the thicket was a yellow-bellied flycatcher, whose activity in the pursuit of small insects was tireless. He certainly found enough to eat, for small insects have been unusually abundant this summer, while birds have been noticeably scarce near Chocorua. Some species, usually well represented, have seemingly vanished, and others, quite numerous in average years, have been very sparingly represented. For instance, the summer has passed without my seeing either an oriole or a winter wren, while redstarts and chestnut-sided warblers, usually among the most numerous species, have been represented by a mere handful of birds. The supposed local causes of this dearth of small birds are a heavy snowfall, which occurred the last week in May, and a hailstorm, which did great damage just in the middle of the nesting period. Unusual numbers of birds are said to have been killed by spring storms in the Gulf States before the year's migration really began.

At eleven o'clock a flock of small birds moved rapidly across the meadow, and four of the number passed through my covert. They were a chickadee and three Wilson's blackcaps. I wish the latter bird lived here in the breeding season, for it is a pretty, confiding, gentle little creature. The departure of these birds was hastened by the appearance on the lake shore of a young man, a boy, and a dog. The man carried a gun, and the dog rushed about in an excited way, doing his best in cur fashion to aid in the hunt. When the trio reached the brook at the point where it debouched upon the lake sand, the man cursed the stream for its width, and the boy, in a loud nasal voice, followed his example. They stood upon the farther side for several minutes pouring out blasphemy and filth until a sandpiper attracted their attention and their gun spoke sharply. The bird escaped, perhaps to die in the meadow grass, and again the two intelligent human beings invoked wrath upon the bird, the stream, the meadow, the dog, and the gun. Then they crossed the brook higher up, where it was narrower, and distance covered their conversation with a welcome veil. As long as the pleasant memories of that quiet day linger in my mind, so long will there be drawn through them a black line of disgust at the vileness of the two representatives of my

own species who offered such a contrast to the purity of nature.

From eleven until one o'clock there was almost unbroken stillness near the great tree. Now and then some one of the regular residents of the meadow spoke, a dragonfly buzzed past, a small pickerel stirred in the brook, or a frog said "*wurro, wurroùh*," and splashed in the still water among the reeds. The kingbirds broke the monotony by coming, three strong, with much noise and fluttering to take possession of the tree. One of them flew to the sand by the lake ripples and drank. Then all three came upon the lowest branches of the big tree and looked at the dark pool below. One flew obliquely against the water, striking it and dashing a thousand bright drops into the air. He rose chattering and returned to his perch, shaking himself. I thought he had aimed for a fly and struck the water unintentionally, but down he went again, making even more of a splash than before, and presently both the others followed his example at such frequent intervals that the pool had no time to smooth its ripples. This odd kind of bathing was continued for ten minutes, during which time a cat-bird sneaked down upon the sand and watched the process silently but with evident interest. Later he saw me sitting motionless under the

bushes, and flew directly at me, turning sharply just before reaching my head, and making a loud noise both by striking his wings against branches and by his harsh voice. If his purpose was to startle me he certainly succeeded.

The afternoon was clear, still, and warm, and the birds were evidently drowsy. From two until after four nothing perched in the tree. A sandpiper amused me by his patient search for food, as he waded back and forth on the mud over which the brook spread as it entered the lake. For an hour he confined himself to a space less than six feet square and worked over almost every inch of it. Much of the time he merely prodded the mud gently with his long, quill-like bill, but occasionally he seemed to see something squirm, and then he pursued it quickly and stabbed more vigorously. Much of the time the water was above his knees, and sometimes he ran into deeper places, so that it lapped upon his breast. Twice he plunged his head and neck entirely under water, but his eyes seemed to need no wiping when they emerged as wide open as before. Sometimes he crossed his legs and stood like a camp-stool, with his thin props meeting their equally straw-like reflections in the brook. After a while a second sandpiper appeared, but his method was to travel rapidly along the water line, and he was soon out of sight.

It was not until nearly six o'clock that the tree became really populous again. Then the catbirds went upstairs on its branches, flickers and kingbirds occupied its top; a humming-bird buzzed in the face of a pewee who was perched fully thirty feet from the ground; a sapsucking woodpecker came and drummed for a moment, and finally a flock of cedar-birds rested in it for a while as they had in the morning. The sun set and night breathed upon the meadow. A single cedar-bird remained in the tip of the tree and drearily repeated his one dismal word. Below in the shadows the catbirds were restlessly mewling, and as it grew dark the lament of the hermits joined in the gloomy chorus. The sky was fair, and rosy lights flowed and ebbed in the clouds. The stars came, and in the distant pines a barred owl sounded his long trumpet note. A few minutes after seven, when catbirds and hermits were silent for the night, I heard a solitary sandpiper whistling at the mouth of the brook. My glass brought his tiny form to view, and as I watched him, a second tattler ran along the gleaming sand and the whistling ceased. Suddenly they flew together as though startled, and the next moment I saw what I had supposed to be a bunch of pickerel-weed growing in the shallows move slowly eastward. The object was several rods from the

shore, and moving across the mouth of the brook. Now it glided a few inches, then it paused. Ten minutes passed before it progressed as many yards. It was the heron's ghostly form. When he reached the eastern shore a light flashed across the lake and a voice sounded. He flew. I rose to go, but as I crept out upon the sand I turned to take a last look at the tree, and saw there the heron, standing on a high limb, black against the sky.

## MIGRATION.

For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,

. . . . .

Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,

And flowers put on a fairer hue,

And everything was strange and new.

THE quaint story of Noah's gathering the animals into the ark is always linked in my mind with the Pied Piper, and with that strange turn in the tide of bird life which is called migration. The marvelous music which charmed the rats and children of Hamelin town must have been used by Noah to call his creatures into the ark of safety, and it is still to be heard in the winds of autumn sighing through the Chocorua forests and calling the birds away to other lands. One day all is calm and serene; the next, though the sky is just as blue and the sunlight just as warm, something of unrest is in the air, and the birds are telling each other the story of the great journey. Songs are forgotten or sung only to greet the dawn and bless the night; nestlings are trained to flight and led silent journeys through field, forest, or ether after food; new scenes are visited, and the weak



separated from the strong and left to die. Then, sometimes by day, sometimes by night, the hosts meet, drawn together by a force as irresistible and mysterious as magnetism, and finally the story of the great journey is written in fact once more.

In the August mornings I hear the Swainson's thrush by the lake. He was not there a few days before, he was on the mountain-side. He is drifting southward, slowly at first, but feeling the thrill of the Pied Piper's music in his wings. All through the summer I have listened in vain for the nasal "*quank, quank, quank*," of the red nuthatch. Suddenly, in mid-August, I hear it on the mountain, and an hour or two later every flock of chickadees brings the northern migrant's call along with the jolly chorus of "*dee, dee, dee*." These chickadees, alert, courageous, tireless, and generous, are the convoys of the warbler fleets. For an hour the silence of the forest will be broken only by the tiresome platitudes of the red-eyed vireo, the dry staccato of the harvest-fly, and the occasional whistle of a hyla. Then, far away, will be heard the faint "*dee-dee*" of the titmouse. It comes nearer, and presently a dozen or twenty little birds are seen hovering, darting, flitting, but steadily advancing, tree by tree, through the woods. Perhaps not more than one in ten will be a chickadee, yet it is the chick-

adee which gives character and direction to the body. The guided flock of easy-going warblers and vireos, nuthatches and kinglets, drift on, feeding and frolicking, heedless of what it passes.

If the observer "squeaks," or if an owl draws the attention of the passing birds, the chickadee comes to the front at once, with his sharp reproving iterations, and his beady eyes snapping indignantly. Along with him come red-eyed and solitary vireos, nuthatches, golden-crested kinglets, black-throated blue warblers, Wilson's blackcaps, young chestnut-sided warblers, looking puzzlingly unlike their parents. Blackburnians, with throats aflame; black-throated greens, rich in spring tints of yellow and tender green; black and white creepers, the tidiest of birds; the gay magnolias, redstarts, Canadians, and sober myrtle warblers. Sometimes a single flock contains nearly all of these courtiers of the woods, while others are composed almost entirely of a single species, as, for example, the black-throated greens, or the magnolias.

In these same late August and early September days the cherry and berry eaters gather together and travel in flocks. Robins by scores, sometimes by hundreds, combine with the cedar-birds and flickers and range over the country in

search of food. The flickers feed much of the time upon the ground among the berry-bushes, casting aside woodpecker habits and seeming more like starlings. The robins are sometimes with them upon the ground, but oftener in the wild cherry-trees with the cedar-birds, stripping bough after bough of its dark fruit. When the flock moves, the cedar-birds mass themselves and fly for a while as though linked together. Then, without apparent cause, part or the whole turn about and fly first this way, then that, perhaps coming back, after a few minutes, to the point of departure. When a flock of red crossbills do this, they sprinkle the air and the earth with sweet notes; but the cedar-birds have no joy in their one chilly whistle, and there is more of aimless, witless indecision in their flights than there is of romping. Whenever I come near one of their flocks, I scan them carefully, hoping to detect the white wing-bars of a Bohemian waxwing among them, yet it is more than likely that I may watch a lifetime without having the fortune to see in the flesh one of those rare vagabonds of the north. The roving habits of these birds and of the crossbills contrast strangely with the simple steadfastness of the grouse, and the clock-like punctuality of many of the migrants. Something in that cold past with its glaciers and ice-crushed continents

could explain the present temperaments of the wandering birds, but we may never know what that something is. Whether we are to know it or not, it is natural to have a feeling akin to pity for birds so lacking in home life.

The winter wren is an amusing little migrant. He seems to have an underground railway of his own from the grim northern forest straight towards a milder clime. Like other underground ways, it has breathing holes, and out of these he occasionally pops his head and sputters at the observer. Sometimes he appears at an opening in a stone wall and scolds mankind for picking blackberries or plucking goldenrod; again he emerges from the darkness beneath a log in the swamp, and bustles about with the offensive energy of a special policeman. If he travels in company, the fact is not often made evident. He certainly seems too crusty for pleasant companionship on a long journey. One late September morning a winter wren flew into my hen-house and became my prisoner for a few hours. I placed him in a room and watched his efforts to escape. He flew with such speed that he made almost as much of a humming as a humming-bird. He clung to the woodwork, and hid in the curtains, but finally dropped to the floor and ran about like a mouse, hiding in corners or behind the legs of chairs.

Once or twice I caught him and stroked his head and neck. He was quiet enough while I touched him, but the moment my fingers left him, he slipped away out of sight. When taken out of doors and set free, he darted into the nearest stone wall and was seen no more.

Birds of the upper air which feed on insects depart early. The eaves swallows and martins go while some mothers are still sitting on be-lated eggs. Bank swallows, barn swallows, night-hawks, and many of the tyrant flycatchers have vanished by the time the maples begin to flame upon the mountain-side. On the 3d of August, 1891, I saw about twenty martins in the dead tree. They were very noisy, and evidently excited. While watching them I saw in the zenith what looked like a cloud of insects. My glass showed it to be a large flock of birds, apparently swallows, moving in a great circle. After a time all but one of the martins in the tree flew away and were gone many minutes, the birds in the sky also disappearing. The martins returned, however, to the one which had not flown, and shortly after I again discovered the bird cluster in the sky. After fresh noise and flutterings of wings the martins finally flew, and no more were seen near the lake that season. Often in an August afternoon the lake will be apparently without birds, when

in a twinkling the air will be full of graceful forms, and a flock of white-breasted swallows, barn swallows, or night-hawks will sweep over the blue water, rise, vanish over the meadow, reappear, fly towards the peak, wheel, return, and then perhaps speed away, not to greet the fair lake again until ice and snow have come and gone, and the number of their own light forms has been sadly diminished in the south.

A field of buckwheat or other small grain is a magnet in the days when the birds are wandering. To it come the song sparrows, chip-ping sparrows, white-throats, juncos, purple finches, field sparrows, goldfinches, and bay-winged buntings. They love to linger many days in the stubble; and when bird music is rare, their occasional songs are precious to the ear. If the field is approached softly there seems to be no life hidden in its midst, but suddenly wings whirr noisily, and bird after bird flies up into the neighboring trees and bushes. Sparrows love fences, stone walls, and their accompanying growths of berry-bushes and small trees. The latter are our New England substitutes for the hedgerows of the Old World, and I believe the sparrow tribe takes as much comfort in wall and briers as in hedge and ditch. The ditch is more than replaced by countless brooks, always clear and pure, and the wall

gives shade, shelter, food, and many a comfortable perch. While driving along the narrow roads, bordered by many a mile of rough stone wall, the rattle of my wagon wheels startles the sparrows and finches from their cover. The bay-wing runs along the rut in front of the horse; the goldfinch undulates over the field, turns, and ripples back; the song sparrow mounts a bush-top and scolds; the white-throat appears for a moment in a gap between the bushes and then goes on with his scratching in the leaves. So they go southward along the dusty roads, or the borders of dry field and dryer pasture. They are thousands strong, yet they look to be but a few each day, and the careless eye might think them always the same individuals from mid-August until Indian summer.

Sometimes alone, but often with the field sparrows and bay-wings, or later with the juncos, flocks of bluebirds travel the autumnal way. This year, on August 28, I saw a flock of twelve working slowly along a moor-like pasture ridge in company with double their number of sparrows. I have seen them by dozens in early October mingle with juncos and white-throats in gleaning over the stubble just left bare by the melting of a first snowfall. As they fly from spot to spot, they prefer to alight



on the upper curve of a boulder, the tip of a cedar, or some equally favorable point for seeing and being seen. They are comparatively silent, but now and then their sweet "*cheruit*" comes as a promise that after the long winter spring shall return, and with it their loveliness and courage. Many of the birds go south cheerfully, or indifferently, but the bluebirds seem to linger sadly and lovingly, and to feel that the migration is an enforced exile from the home they love best.

The Chocorua country is not a good one for starlings and blackbirds; in fact, I have never seen but one bobolink nearer than Fryeburg intervalles, twenty-five miles away; and with all my watching, no crow blackbird or meadow lark has ever caught my eye in this region. The old residents say that years ago, when flax was cultivated hereabouts and grain-fields were broader, these birds were present in large numbers. The first flock of rusty grackles which I have ever seen here appeared this year on a hill-top, about the middle of the afternoon of September 22. The birds were either very tame or very weary, for they remained in the tops of some locust-trees, while I not only stood beneath them, but shook their tree, called to them, and clapped my hands. They maintained a steady flow of *sotto voce* music charming to the ear.



All migrants are not desirable visitors. An inroad of hawks is far from pleasant for the birds of a neighborhood, or for other migrants. All through the month of September hawks abound. They circle round the peak of Chocorua, seemingly for the pleasure of it. Often a dozen sharp-shinned and young Cooper's hawks are in sight there at once. Sometimes great flocks of hawks pass across the sky, not circling, as the red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks are so fond of doing, but sailing straight before the wind like a fleet of mackerelmen running down the coast wing and wing. I once saw three hundred and thirty migrating hawks in one forenoon, most of them a thousand feet or less above the earth, but some so high that a powerful glass only just brought them into view. The stately progress of these birds, moving many miles an hour without a wing-beat visible to the observer, is one of the wonders of nature. The Dead Tree is a resting-place for migrating hawks, eagles, and ospreys. I doubt not that by night it is used by owls, when they too move southward as their food grows scarce.

In several different years I have seen my big blue heron sail away southward. In each instance it has been about four o'clock in the afternoon. Rising with slow and dignified flight, he makes two or three immense circles

over the lakes, and then, as though partings were said, landmarks remembered, and bearings taken, he flies with strong and steady strokes towards the outlet of the Ossipee basin. This year, in August, ten night herons visited us at one time, remaining in the neighborhood two or three days. When disturbed by day, they rose, and, forming an orderly flock, flew away with military precision. The ducks and geese are, however, the best examples of well-drilled companies. Geese are not often seen here, although several were killed this spring in a small lake halfway between Chocorua and the Bearcamp. Wood duck and black duck begin to fly past us late in August, but their numbers are comparatively insignificant, a flock of ten being unusually large. In October and early November the wind-swept lakes are seldom without little companies of black ducks, sheldrakes, and their less common relatives.

One of the most interesting of migrants is the loon, or great northern diver. Loons are said to breed in this vicinity on Whitton Pond, and they are seen now and then during all the summer months. It is on the edge of a north-east storm in September, when mackerel clouds deck the sky and the hazy sunlight spreads gold upon the ripples, that the migrating loon comes with the force of a cannon-ball, and plunges

into the lake's waters. His shrill laughter is taken up by all the mocking forests, and his deep and prolonged diving carries consternation to bass and pickerel. Restlessly he plows the ruffled water with his broad breast, and now and then he pounds the waves with his wings, raising his head high above them. When he flies, the water is churned into foam for many yards before his unwieldy body is finally raised into the air and placed under the full control of his powerful wings. Then he rises little by little, his wings moving faster and faster, until, after progressing half a mile, he has risen two or three hundred feet. Turning, he comes back, still rising, and passes in review the lake and forests which he is to leave. Again and again he tacks, on each new line rising farther from the earth, until at last, seen against the sky, he is but a pair of swiftly whirling wings set strangely far back on the long black line of his head, neck, and body. It is said that hunters have been killed by being struck by falling loons shot by them on the wing.

Occasionally a stray sea-bird comes to the mountain lakes. Herring gulls have been seen on Chocorua Pond, a Wilson's tern was shot on August 30, 1890, on Ossipee Lake, and a year earlier, on September 30, a black tern remained half a day on my lonely lake.

Late in September and in October there are days when the rush of migrating birds is like the stampede of a defeated army. I recall one such day, the 25th of September, 1891, when a torrent of migrants swept past my red-roofed cottage in the hour following sunrise. Before breakfast, and without going out of sight of my door, I saw over two hundred birds go by, including sixty pigeon woodpeckers, several sapsuckers, nuthatches, chickadees, crows, blue jays, robins, catbirds, seven kinds of warblers, solitary and red-eyed vireos, four kinds of sparrows, a tanager, pewees, and a flock of cedar-birds. Most of these birds were on the trees, bushes, or ground, busily feeding, yet restlessly progressing southwestward, as though haunted by some irresistible impulse to keep in motion. The day was hot and still, and my notes mention the fact that we heard the splash of an osprey as he plunged into the lake, more than a quarter of a mile away. That evening the whippoorwills were singing their farewells in the soft moonlight.

As the early October days glide by, these waves of migration come faster and faster, their acceleration seeming, as one looks back upon it, like the ever quicker throbbing of the air under the wing-beats of the grouse. Even as the drumming suddenly ceases and the summer air

seems still and heavy in the silence which follows, so the migration suddenly ends, and the woods and fields become very still in the late Indian summer. Now and then the scream of a blue jay falls upon the ear, or a faint note of a tree sparrow comes from the weeds by the roadside; but as a rule nature is dumb, and the leaves fall like tears. All the beauty of sky and autumn foliage cannot bring the birds back to the silent forest. Warm though the sun may be, and soft the haze on the cheek of Pas-saconaway, these charms cannot woo back the birds from their migration. The music of the Pied Piper has bewitched them, they are dreaming of gushing waters and flowers of fairest hue; and many a frosty, starlit night will pass before their wings beat once more in the clear Chocorua air.

## TRAPPING GNOMES.

WHEN the harvest moon is large and the nights clear, I love to spend an evening hour or two under the great oak-trees on the shore of my lonely lake. The soft mists creep across the water, bats flit back and forth squeaking, the whippoorwills call to each other that the time for migration is near at hand, and sometimes the voices of the barred owls wake weird echoes in the lake's curves. Sitting motionless in the black shadow, I am unseen and unsuspected by the night creatures round me. Many feet move upon the dry leaves, and the fluttering of wings disturbs the still air. Measuring the evening from sunset until ten o'clock, it seems a period of more activity than the day. Hours roll by in the September sunlight with scarce a sign of life near the lake, but the coming of twilight is a signal for awakening. High in the oaks the gray squirrels are busy with the acorns. In the stillness of the night an acorn falling against one and another bunch of stiff leaves, finally striking upon the ground, seems to make an unduly loud noise. The fine squeak

of a bat might pass unnoticed in the daytime, but in the gloom it carries far and comes upon the ear sharply.

In these hours the ground gives up its cave-dwellers, and their soft feet rustle the leaves in all the forest and by every brookside. From the ledges of Chocorua, foxes by dozens descend upon the surrounding farms and search for mice and other prey. It is the light snowfall which betrays the great number of these wary marauders, and not the secretive leaves of autumn, upon whose dry surfaces the fox-tread makes no imprint. From his den under the screes the hedgehog wanders through the woods or seeks the orchard. The skunk, too, is abroad, poking his snout into ant-hills or among mouldering leaves where insects lie hidden. It is neither fox nor skunk which makes the soft pattering just behind the old oak against which I lean. A smaller wanderer than they comes there, and as surely as gnomes have settled in America this must be one of their haunts. I feel certain of it when a squeaky little whisper follows the pattering, or when occasionally a tiny form darts across a patch of moonlight near the edge of the water.

In these September hunting-days I have left the grouse to feed undisturbed among the blackberries, and the hare to dream away the sunlit

hours in his form among the swamp evergreens. Gnome-hunting has been my pastime, and so low is our human estimate of the character and usefulness of these tiny creatures that my conscience has not given the faintest bit of a twinge when I have brought home dead gnomes from field, meadow, mountain, and forest. Our gnomes are not all of one kind, and when I started with my game-bag in the September sunlight I did not feel sure what manner of elf I might bring home with me. Setting out early on the morning of the 12th, I dashed the dew from the brakes as I crossed an open pasture on the way to my lonely lake. The brakes were growing brown, yet we had had no frost, and the equinox was still ten days distant. The sumacs were gorgeous in green, scarlet, and orange, waiting for the first rain or wind to hurl to the ground half their gay leaves. As they hung motionless in the sunlight, they seemed brilliant enough for the tropics. Asters and goldenrod joined them in painting part of the picture with high colors, and so did the maples on the high ledges of the mountain where a bear-hunter's fire raged last October. A bit of woodbine climbing up the maple trunk gleamed like flames, mountain-ash berries were full of the same fire, and the clustered fruit of the hobblebush glowed in the midst of its maroon and crimson foliage.



What means this decking of the earth in autumn with scarlet and purple, crimson and gold, russet and orange? The flowers of the spring-time are full of joyous color, in order that the wandering bee and butterfly may aid in their fertilization. The bird gleams with color as the glow-worm gleams with fire, that his mate may not forget him in the mazes of the life-dance. The autumn is the season of ripening, of the gathering of harvests, of the decay of the earthly, and the creation of that which shall endure. Are these colors only the emblems of death, the garlands upon the pall, or are they the signals which Nature hangs on high to call her forces into ranks for the battle against extinction and in favor of persistent life? Surely the berry which by its brilliancy of color calls the bird to it, in order that it may be eaten and its seeds carried afar, is as wise as the flower which by its tints and perfume attracts the bee and secures fertilization. Perhaps the tree which blazes with autumn color is avoided by insects whose instinct teaches them to shun colors in contrast to their own.

Just beyond the sumacs is the stump of a prehistoric pine. It has lasted generations since its towering pillar fell and sank year by year deeper into the soil. Its hard gray walls look as though they might endure half a century

more of snow and sunshine. Gnomes live under that stump, and the first of my traps was set at their cave archway. Kneeling down behind the clustering blackberry briers, I could see the archway just at the head of the opening between two of the great buttress roots of the stump. Moss was growing at the threshold, ferns overhung the doorway, and a tiny path led through the grass from the arch into the dry pasture beyond the briers. Yes, the trap had been sprung, and crushed beneath its cruel springs was a gray gnome. His eyes were large and dark. His coat was of soft gray, and his waistcoat snowy. His hands and feet were very white and his elfin ears mischievously large and erect. The name of this gnome is quite musical, — *Hesperomys*, the evening gnome.

In a deep hollow between wooded banks runs the pasture brook. It comes from the forest-clad mountain-side, and flows to a dark swamp, beyond which is the lake. Gnomes live by the brook, both in the hollow and in the swamp. Nine traps were set in the hollow and eighteen in the swamp. These traps are, with true Yankee originality, named "cyclones," and they are nearly perfect as engines of destruction. Upon a small square of tin are hinged two rectangles of stiff wire, so attached to strong springs that they naturally lie flat upon the square of tin.

One rectangle is smaller than the other so that it just lies within it. The trap is set by raising the rectangles until they make a tent-like frame, and then securing them by a catch. The best lure for gnomes is whole corn, which is placed near the centre of the square of tin in a tiny cup suspended by a lever to the catch which holds the trap open. The gnome steps softly through the wire rectangles and tries to lift the grain from the cup. Woe to him if he presses ever so lightly upon the side of the cup, for if it is depressed, and the other end of the lever moved, the catch is cast free and the rectangles fall together with such force as to crush any small creature which stands below them.

The nine traps set by the brook were in groups of three. As I drew near the first group, I looked for broken twigs and a scrap of white cotton tied to a branch, my signals to show where the traps were placed. Bent twigs with their leaves slightly withered and drooping are readily seen at a long distance. The first three traps were set at a point where the banks of the brook were steep, and the level moss near the water only a narrow belt. At one place a mossy log crossed this level, a mouldering stump crowned with ferns flanked it, and a big boulder raised a wall of granite parallel with the stream. Just across the brook was another long log covered

with moss, violet leaves, and rue. One trap was on this log, one by the boulder close to a little hole running under it, and the third near the mouldering stump. At first as I stood in the midst of the traps I could see none of them. The corn scattered near had been carried away or eaten, and the strings by which the traps were tied to stakes were not where I remembered to have left them. Suddenly I saw one trap. It was sprung and drawn away among the leaves. Something was in it, something I had never before seen, a creature more beautiful than any squirrel, as graceful as a swallow and as suggestive of speed and lightness. I knelt over this slender, brightly-clad gnome, and released his lifeless body from the trap. His cobweb-like whiskers were wonderfully long, his coat was of pale straw color and brown, his waistcoat of purest white. No monkey has a tail proportionally longer than the seemingly endless white-tipped appendage of *Zapus insignis*, this jumping gnome of the mountain streams. Exquisite creature, I thought, how can I have lived so long among woods and brooks without suspecting your presence? But for a "cyclone" I might never have known that such a being existed.

The other two traps were sprung, one containing a second *Zapus*, and the third a gray

*Hesperomys*. Similar fortune had attended the remaining traps by the brook, three containing specimens of *Zapus*, two of *Hesperomys*, and one a large mole with fur as fine as the softest silk velvet. I pushed on eagerly to the series of traps in the swamp.

On the way I crossed a strip of level pasture over which a grove of gray birches is rapidly spreading year by year. Several of them are bent so that their upper branches sweep the ground. They are victims of the snow and ice storms of winter, and, unlike the Arlington cedars, they are not resilient enough to recover an erect position. In the heart of the grove, a family of sapsucking woodpeckers had been at work in one of their "orchards." Eight trees bore marks of their mischievous tapping, and in the two principal trees many hundreds of holes had been made by them. Their thirst is as insatiable as Mulvaney's, but I supposed that before this time they had wearied of their summer fountains. Not so; one of them was hitching around the drills, dipping as persistently as in early July, and bees buzzed near him, enjoying their share of the tree's sweets. Restraining my impatience to see the swamp traps, I watched long for a humming-bird to visit the drills, but none came, thus confirming my impression that they not only arrive in New Eng-

land later than the sapsuckers, but that they migrate southward earlier.

While I waited under the birches, a gray squirrel came tripping over the grass and through the brakes. His great brush was not carried over his back, but in an arch behind him. His approach was so noisy that at first I thought a dog was coming towards me, but his voice betrayed him. "*Cluck, cluck, cluck, cleck, cleck, cleck, cleck, clēek.*" If a "cyclone" had been choking him he could not have made sounds any more queer. When at last he discovered me, he lowered his tail and undulated very softly away.

The first of the second series of traps was set on the slope leading down towards the moist bed of the swamp. It contained one of the white-footed gray gnomes. The next three were empty. Number five was in the darkest part of the swamp on a huge upturned stump whose twisted roots, looking like the arms of a devil-fish, reached far into the air. The trap was sprung, and the gnome in it was as new to my eyes as *Zapus* had been. Coarse, chestnut-brown hair, in parts almost as bright as red mahogany, small eyes, conspicuous ears, and a tail so short that it seemed only a stump of something more satisfactory, were the conspicuous points in this gnome. His name, as I later

learned, was *Evotomys*, the long-eared gnome. His rich coloring matched to perfection the decayed hemlock stump in which he lived, and harmonized with the brown bark of pines and the stained waters of the swamp brooks. In the sunlight, or upon the sand by the brookside, he would have been conspicuous. Where he lay he looked like a fragment of the reddish wood under him.

Five more of his tribe, and a tiny shrew, only three inches long, were found in the remaining swamp traps. One of the gnomes had been nearly devoured as he lay in the trap, the parts remaining being skin, feet, tail, and a small portion of the head. I suspected a big mole of being the ghoul. On my way home I looked in a trap set under a small foot-bridge which spanned a damp spot in a mowing-field. The victims here — for two had been caught at once — were of the family *Arvicola*, the sturdy gnomes of the fields. Their eyes were very small, their ears almost concealed by their coarse, dark-brown hair, and their bodies awkwardly but strongly built. They are the farming gnomes.

On September 17, I walked from Berry's to the Swift River intervale, over the once "lost trail," now nearly completed as a broad bridle-path and winter road. I took twenty-five

“cyclones” with me and set them at the most favorable spots along the way. Brook crossings, big, moss-grown stumps or logs, boulders overhanging springs or rivulets, and old logging camps were among the places which seemed to me likely to be frequented by gnomes. As I was not to return until the next day, a night would intervene to give the little cave-dwellers time to smell the corn and to inspect and spring the traps.

The intervale was very beautiful as it lay tranquil in the autumn haze, but the memories of last Christmas-time had a charm about them which even the foretaste of Indian summer could not equal. Snow adds greatly to the dignity and grandeur of our New England mountains, making them more akin to the Alps, perpetual in their wintry covering. Chocorua, always a reminder of the Matterhorn, is much more like it when clad in ice, and rose-tinted by the morning sun. Even Swift River, framed in meadow brakes, waving osmundas, and gay scarlet maples, seemed less sparkling than when set in ice and overhanging banks of pure white snow.

As night came, coldness suggestive of winter crept over the great plain. The first light frost came caressingly in the still night hours and fell upon the pumpkin vines and the delicate



ferns by the roadside, so that morning saw them wither away and die in the early sunbeams. With the dawn came many bird-notes. Crows, jays, flickers, red nuthatches, chickadees, golden kinglets, robins, cedar-birds, and goldfinches all made their voices heard. In the bushes by the road, Maryland yellow-throats mingled with various migrating sparrows, and among the spruces dozens of warblers flitted joyously back and forth, saying little, perhaps because nuthatches and red-eyed vireos said too much. Swallows had gone, but grace of flight was shown by hawks of various kinds which circled, soared, or shot past on even wing. The fickle crossbills, present a year ago this week in large numbers, were nowhere to be seen.

Sabba Day Falls were even grander than I remembered them to be, and although nothing could surpass in loveliness the icicles, frozen spray, masses of snow, and other paraphernalia of winter which had surrounded them in December, their present dress of tender green and brown, relieved by autumnal colors and crowned by a cloudless sky of purest blue, was wonderfully fair to look upon, and to lay away in the mind for weary days when brick walls and English sparrows should replace the wilderness and its warblers.

It was high noon when I turned my back on

Carrigain and Bear and climbed the ridge towards Paugus valley. Would the traps be sprung? The question gave speed to my footsteps, which might otherwise have lagged by spring or brookside, for the day was meltingly warm and no breeze came over the Paugus ramparts. The first trap was near the top of the ridge, under a huge boulder. It was two miles from the nearest house in the intervale, and more than double that distance from Berry's or any other inhabited dwelling in Tamworth. Perhaps gnomes did not live in spots so remote from man and his grain-fields. The trap was sprung. *Evotomys* had found it and perished. The next one was sprung, and a second long-eared victim lay in it. So with the third and fourth, set at intervals of many rods. The fifth was sprung, but empty; the sixth contained a gray *Hesperomys*; the seventh another *Evotomys*. I was now in the deep, dark valley between the northern ridges of Paugus and Chocorua. Three miles and a half of the roughest mountain woodland lay between this spot and tilled land, yet animal life was so abundant that it seemed to make no difference where I set my traps and scattered my corn; gnomes were everywhere waiting.

Out of twenty-five traps, fifteen held victims and six others were sprung, but empty. One

of the slain was a chipmunk, another a mole. Of the remainder, three were long-tailed gray *Hesperomys*, and ten were red-backed *Evotomys*. The latter are clearly the most numerous inhabitants of the dark evergreen forests, but they are also to be found near secluded farm buildings in spots where the fulvous *Hesperomys* is the prevailing sprite. Among these gnomes of the woods and fields, all true American species, a European intruder is found. In some thickly settled places he has done among gnomes what the European sparrow has done among birds, elbowed himself into exclusive possession. When found in a trap, or seen scampering along the pantry shelf, this gnome is called, in vulgar English, *a mouse*.

## OLD SHAG.

OLD SHAG, Toadback, or Paugus Mountain stands in the Sandwich range between Chocorua on the east and Passaconaway on the west. It is better armed against attack by mountain climbers than any of its neighbors, and this in spite of the fact that in elevation it is the lowest of the range. Its defenses consist of numerous radiating ridges covered with dense growths of spruce and crossed by belts of "harricane," miles of cliffs so forbidding as to repel any but determined assault, and ravines choked by débris of rock and fallen forest. No path of any kind leads to its top, and when its summit is gained, none of the familiar marks indicating previous visits by egg-eating, initial-cutting tourists are discoverable.

Like most impregnable fortresses, Paugus has its weak spot. There is a way to reach its southern summit without touching a "harricane," climbing a precipice, or struggling through more than a few rods of spruce jungle. Moreover, on this way the traveler is sung to by one of the most musical of streams, while his eyes

are charmed by the ever-changing beauties of a series of as exquisite cascades as are to be found in the White Mountains. It is true that in midsummer the brook is so reduced in size that its chief charm is seriously lessened, but if the time chosen for ascent is in spring, autumn, or after a heavy summer rain, the falls will be found at their best.

On the morning of September 15, a party of four persons entered the "lost trail," leading from Berry's to the Swift River intervale. A heavy rain had fallen during the whole of the preceding day, and Paugus River, with all its sons and daughters, grandchildren brooks, and great-grandchildren rivulets, made the forest resound with the music of innumerable singing falls and rapids. Following the old trail for two miles, the party reached a spot where a good-sized stream appeared flowing eastward from the great hollow in the eastern flank of Paugus. Leaving the bridle-path at this point, and walking nearly due west, the explorers followed the branch towards its source. As the region was reported to be thickly set with bear-traps, the party walked in Indian file, while their leader sounded and punched every foot of moss and soft leaf mould with his stout staff. The traps used by the hunters on these mountains are murderous inventions, consisting of

two huge steel jaws lined with sharp teeth. The trap, when set, is buried beneath a layer of moss. If a bear or man steps between the opened jaws, thereby pressing a pan which frees the two powerful springs below the jaws, the trap closes instantaneously, the teeth are locked in the flesh, cutting sinews and crushing bone. A man thus caught is maimed for life, if, indeed, he does not die from starvation and pain before he can be released from his horrible imprisonment. A bear usually drags the trap until its anchor catches in a tree, or his strength is exhausted. Sometimes he gnaws off his foot and crawls away bleeding and crippled. The trap weighs from twenty-five to forty pounds, and although usually marked in such a way that its owner can recognize it, no name betrays the identity of the trapper.

The places chosen by the bear hunter for setting his traps are those to which a bear is in the habit of going often. On damp and mossy spots the great footprints of the brute show plainly, and when the trapper is satisfied that Bruin walks that way habitually, he cuts out a square of moss upon which the footprint is plainly visible, places his open trap in the hole, restores the moss with great care, and goes away for a week, or even longer, visiting other traps, some of which may be many miles away.

If signs of any proper kind were placed near the traps to warn the passer-by of his peril, there would be small reason to complain of bear-trapping, but unhappily no such signals are displayed, and man, if he wanders in wild places, is in as much danger as the bears. The brook bed which our party of four was ascending is one of the best grounds for bears in all the Sandwich range. No wonder, then, that we watched and sounded anxiously for hidden traps.

As we walked westward into the hollow in the side of Paugus, the ground rose rapidly and the level land on the edges of the stream soon gave way to steeply sloping banks. For beech, birch, and maple were substituted spruce, balsam fir, and hemlock; the rapids of the brook changed to falls; glimpses of sky were replaced by occasional peeps at spruce-capped gray cliffs hanging high above us, and we felt as though if we kept on we should soon enter the black interior of a vast cavern, unless some unseen avenue to light and air appeared. The barometer showed that we had climbed nearly a thousand feet, when suddenly there opened before us a view of a succession of high, steeply-sloping ledges, polished by rushing water and festooned with delicate mosses. A sheet of clear and sparkling water, stained a rich hemlock brown

by the moss beds through which it had filtered, poured in quivering folds over the rock. Standing by the side of the pool at the foot of the lowest incline, we could see four of these smooth ledge faces rising one behind another above us. Climbing to their top, we saw as many more still higher, and beyond them all, twin cascades gleamed through the trees, as they fell from a ledge in the middle of which a mass of black spruces and huge gray rocks seemed to form an island poised in the air between the two halves of the torrent.

Nearly a thousand feet above this twin fall, yet so close beyond it that my companions almost despaired of further progress up the mountain, was a wall of gray rock suspended between the sky and the tree-tops. It was the last redoubt of the impregnable Paugus. Was there a rift in its apparently solid face? Yes, I knew that there must be, because years before I had come down this ravine from the summit and had found no obstacle to gradual and easy descent. While passing the falls, we used the barometer to ascertain their approximate height, and found a difference of two hundred and fifty feet between the level of the pool at their foot and that of the stream above the twin cascades. The several inclines down which the water shot in rippling sheets were each fifty or sixty feet



long and about twenty-five feet in perpendicular rise. With a stream twice or three times the volume of this brook, Paugus Falls would take rank as among the most beautiful in New England. Even as they are, they deserve a place in song instead of obscurity in an almost unknown corner of a pathless mountain.

Not far above the twin cascades, the brook formerly shot over a polished ledge almost steep enough to form a perfect fall. Here a very unusual and interesting change had been worked in the rock and the course of the water by the action of frost. Just at the point where the polished rock bed of the stream was steepest, a crack had opened at right angles with the current. Of course water had filled this fissure and deepened it until in some winter night a sound of rending must have startled the forest and echoed afar down the gorge. The front of the ledge, measuring twenty yards or more from side to side and nearly half that distance from top to bottom, broke from its ancient foundation and slipped forward about eighteen inches, thus forming a perpendicular crevasse sixty feet long and twenty feet deep. Into this the stream plunged and vanished from sight. Standing just below the crevasse and looking up the smooth face of the ledge, I could see the eager water coming towards me, hurrying forward its

amber masses, bubbles, sheets of foam, and yellow leaves dropped by the ripening trees. As it seemed about to hurl itself upon me and sweep me down its bed, it disappeared.

When the water reached the bottom of the crevasse, it turned aside and flowed at right angles to its course until a fault in the rock allowed it to steal out into the daylight. The crevasse was full of sounds, and amid the splashing, gurgling, and roaring of the water, the ear could fancy that it detected wild cries, sobs, and moans.

Above this rift and cavern of wild waters came many a rod of steep climbing. Again and again an impassable cliff seemed to bar our way, but each time the stream showed us how, by a zigzag or a long diagonal, we could avoid the abrupt face of the rock and find a way to a higher level. Finally, after nearly four hours of climbing we found ourselves in a moist and mossy hollow between two of the summits of the mountain. Northward the rocks rose abruptly to the wooded crest of the highest ridge, southward they rose to the dome-shaped ledge which forms the best height for observation, wind and fire having left it as bald as an egg. It was impossible to cross the moist hollow dry shod, for at no point was it less than a rod wide and in parts it was forty or fifty yards from ledge to

ledge. The brown water stood in pools amid the sphagnum beds and between the stems of trees. Several paths led downward between the low spruces to these pools, but we shunned them. Human feet had not trodden them, unless, indeed, the bear hunter had passed that way and set his traps directly across them. In one place I saw where a bear had recently walked across the sphagnum, leaving the imprint of his huge foot clearly stamped upon the moss.

The view from the dome of Paugus was autumnal in tone. Great masses of cold clouds were sweeping across the blue sky, urged forward by a blustering northwest wind. Wherever the spruce growth upon the mountains was interrupted by deciduous trees, delicate shades of red, yellow, or russet lay in patches between the sombre tones of the evergreens. In spots brilliant scarlet maples stood out boldly, but as a rule the new colors were not pronounced but merely suggestive of the gorgeous transformation soon to be perfected. In the hollows, especially those in which "harricanes" had been overgrown by mountain ash, sumac, and similar perishable wood, the autumnal tints were more prevalent and stronger. The only flowers upon the mountain-top were a few small asters with highly scented leaves, and a goldenrod (*macrophylla*) with large blossoms and coarse leaves.

Old Shag is not high enough to rival Chocorua or Passaconaway with its views, but it affords the only really satisfactory chance of studying those two mountains from a point between them. Chocorua varies strangely in its outlines from different points of view. From the south it looks like a huge lion couchant; from the Albany intervale it is an irregular ridge resembling a breaking wave; from Paugus it seems more like a giant fortress, with battered ramparts lifted high against the sky. A slide, invisible from other points, is seen to extend from the western foot of the peak far down into the forests of the Paugus valley. North of it a ridge densely grown with old spruce runs from the peak northwestward. It is one of the few parts of Chocorua not given up to deciduous trees. Beyond it rises the Champney Falls brook which flows northward into Swift River.

Passaconaway from the Bearcamp valley is one of the most perfect of pyramids; from Paugus it is a rough hump of sinister outline and color. The spruces upon it grow so thickly that it is hard to force a way through them, yet they spring from sides so steep that it seems a marvel that any soil or vegetation can cling to the rocks. A slide of great length shows its scar upon the eastern face, and serves to emphasize the fact that this side of Passaconaway

is really less of a slope than of a continuous precipice nearly three thousand feet from summit to plain. In these almost inaccessible forests several birds from the Canadian fauna are occasionally found. I have seen there in summer both kinds of the three-toed woodpeckers; Canada grouse or spruce partridges have been shot there this autumn, and the moose-bird, or Canada jay, is occasionally seen near the lumber camps.

In descending a mountain in the afternoon which has been climbed in the morning, many new effects of light and shade, color, and even of outline, are observable. This may be puzzling to the guide who does not thoroughly know his path, but it is the one redeeming feature in a homeward scramble to those who are weary enough to regard their second view of a mountain-side as an anti-climax to the triumphant ascent of a new peak. Paugus Falls were more beautiful with the pallor of the afternoon around them, than they were with the southeastern sun shining into their rushing bubbles. They were whiter and the water consequently looked greater in volume. Again we wondered how such rare beauty could have been hidden so long in an untrodden forest, and, wondering, we blazed the trees so that those who might come after us could follow without perplexity

the easy and beautiful way which we had been fortunate enough to find.

When we reached the old trail, about five o'clock, the woods seemed dark and the penetrating coolness of an autumn night was in the air. Twenty minutes later we emerged in the blackberry tangle by the abandoned saw-mill, and found wagons and warm wraps waiting for us. As we looked back towards the golden sunset, the dark dome of Old Shag stood boldly out against the sky. Fire and wind had left scars upon its face, and nature originally made it so rough in outline that "Toadback" is tellingly descriptive of its shape. Toads have their jewels, and so has Paugus, hidden in the shadows of its eastern flank.

## MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

No matter how tightly the body may be chained to the wheel of daily duties, the spirit is free, if it so pleases, to cancel space and to bear itself away from noise and vexation into the secret places of the mountains. Well it is for him who labors early and late at the desk, if his soul can thus spread its wings and soar to deep forests, clear lakes, and rugged mountain peaks, drawing from memory, imagination, and sweet forecast, something to inspire itself to patient action, and something to strengthen the heart in its wish to do its appointed task manfully. As these bright October days slip by and my wheel of daily duties spins round and round in that granite prison called University Hall, my memory takes me back to fair Chocorua. I remember the 6th of October in the year 1884. The sun struggled through soft gray clouds and gazed upon a world of magical opposites. Every maple in a hundred townships blazed with scarlet or gold; yet soft and cold, wrapping the earth from Chocorua's horn to the sand at the lake shore, the first snow of

autumn sparkled in the rays of the rising sun. Skies of blue, forests of fire, fields of snow, — those were the delights of that matchless October dawning.

If the wheel grows too noisy I come back from these visions to my desk and its papers, and open dozens of letters from all over our broad country, from Europe, Japan, Mexico, and from distant India, whence some Harvard soldier of the Cross writes to ask tidings of his *alma mater*. In his day every John knew every William, and the roll of the University never climbed beyond the hundreds. Now the questioner at my side wonders how near we shall come to having three thousand students this year; while the prophet declares that in five years or less Harvard will have distanced Cambridge and Oxford, and become the greatest English-speaking University in the world. Even now her students do not all speak English. Aside from the scores of American youths who hear only light-weight silver dollar English at home, and who learn little that is better at school, there are many who come to Harvard from far-away foreign homes. The tall Bulgarian with his dark eyes full of poetry and fire; the patient Russian Jew, exiled from a cruel land, and struggling night and day to win an education and a fortune in the home of



the free; the dashing young Norwegian, with winning, deferential manners and a light in his blue eyes which speaks of his own glaciers and dark fjords; the gifted Japanese, absorbing philosophy or science with such readiness as to make his slower American competitor blush with shame; the angular Armenian, with his keen, thin face and nervous hands; the self-possessed Costa Rican, the moody Iclander and his taciturn but clear-headed neighbor from Newfoundland, — all are beside me taking turns with their American fellow-students in hurrying my wheel until the day is done.

When the day is done, and pale sunset colors lie in the sky behind the witching iron tracery in the great western gateway, my soul goes northward again into that other October when the early snow melted, and the winds blew in the fair Chocorua land. I go back to a gusty afternoon when we rowed our boat the length of the lakes and landed upon the silent shore of the old Doe farm. It was our first visit to the white sand of that beach, to the little footpath leading upward through the orchard, and to the tumble-down cottage with its huge chimney, in which the swifts had found no smoke for twenty long years. Our first visit, — yet now the anchor of life is so strongly fixed on that shore, and the family fairies so firmly domiciled

on that hearth, that our first voyage of discovery seems as far off as the time when "Kit Columbus sailed from the Papal See."

We wandered through the rooms of the cottage, peeped at the sky through the cracks in its roof, noted the pewee's nest on the wainscoting in the east room, and whirled the old flax-wheel which stood in the dark attic. Then, passing the ancient maples behind the great barn, we strolled on and on through the pastures until a faint path led us to the lonely lake among the dingles, almost at the foot of Chocorua. Softly descending the steep path to the edge of the green water, we saw five black ducks rise from the lake and fly from us over the oaks. The rush of their wings is in my ears to this day, and my eyes recall the clouds which loomed over the peak and swept down upon the lake, bringing much cold wind and a little rain. From the storm-clouds a small hawk came circling down towards the troubled water and tossing birches. As he soared above us, seemingly protesting against our coming into the charmed vale, I shot him. The strong wings gave one spasmodic beat, the fierce head fell forward, and the body shot downward and struck the sand at our feet. We had claimed dominion by force of arms, and when we next saw the lake, it was ours in law.

The wheel turns fastest in the University prison house when pale boys and gaunt young men come to me with confidences of their life-long hope to come to fair Harvard, of mothers' sacrifices, and fathers' toil, of the parson's chiding against the influence of the non-sectarian college, and the schoolmaster's prophecy that Cambridge will be all proud looks and cold hearts, and finally of their own determination to work their way through, no matter what the cost in comfort and energy. It is the same soul-stirring story, whether it speaks from the butternut-colored coat from Georgia, the coarse gray homespun from Cape Breton, or the shiny, long-tailed black frock from Nebraska. Beseeching, honest, or searching eyes look straight into the heart, and the heart would not be good for much if it did not grow warmer under their scrutiny. Generally all except the least useful and adaptable of such men find ways of earning much of that which is needed to keep them decently clad and safely fed during their years of study; but it is anxious work starting them on self-support, and helping them to drive away homesickness.

There is a feeling of gritting sand and the lack of oil in the wheel when purse-proud, overdressed, loud-voiced, tired-eyed youths drift to me in their attempts to escape parts of their

college duties. They have come from shoddy homes to mix shoddy with the honest stuff of Harvard life. It would be better for them, for us, and for all their associates, if they never set foot on scholastic ground. Still they serve as a foil to the noble-hearted men of wealth who are the glory of a college, — men who are strong in their willingness to aid others, pure in heart, active in body, loyal to the ideals of the University.

One reason that the wheel of duty turns hard is to be found in the multitude of human atoms pressing against it. The present system of college government was well adapted for the management of five or six hundred men, for it is an easy task for an officer of keen sympathies and a good memory to carry even more than six hundred men in his mind, and to know their faces, names, and general record. Now that the six hundred have become two thousand, and the same system is applied, each officer being expected to know something of every student, the memory gives way, interest weakens, and discipline through acquaintance becomes impossible. Here and there individual students stand out conspicuously and become well-known figures in the crowd; but it is more likely to be through their success in football than in their studies. The man who attains "Grade A" in all

his studies may be dull-eyed and dingy; but the half-back on the university eleven cannot fail to have in him some of the qualities of the hero.

On the football field of a Saturday afternoon I am less likely to let my thoughts wander away to Chocorua than when at my desk. Something akin to the wild north wind seems surging down old Jarvis when the crimson rush-line guards its bunch of ball-carriers as they fly round the left end, blocking, interfering, sweeping down opposing arms, hurling themselves against crouching tacklers, and finally falling across the line for the triumphant touchdown. That Chocorua north wind is as irresistible in its way, when in October it hurls itself from the mountains and lashes the lake till foam flies in white masses over the crests of the breaking waves. Such winds often arise suddenly, and in a moment change the placid water, full of its reflections of gay forest and lofty peak, into a turbulent mass of waves. I well remember a soft, hazy morning when we rowed a heavy flat-bottomed boat to the northern end of the lake, returning about noon. When in the middle of the pond, the wind caught us, and, turning the boat sideways, drove it towards a shallow cove lined with boulders. Every wave dashed spray and water over the gunwales, and the most vigorous rowing availed nothing against the furi-

ous wind. It was not until I could jump overboard in the shoal water and push the boat before me out of the wind that I really regained the mastery of it.

About the middle of October a vast regiment of birds passes over the Bearcamp valley. On the 13th of October, 1889, I counted and recognized 488 birds. Of these, 173 were crows, flying from the northeast towards the southwest in two great flocks. They passed far above the forests, many of them being much above the tops of the highest mountains. On the same day I counted 143 juncos, which were peppered all over fields, roads, small thickets, pasture bushes, and woods of small height. Wherever we strolled the little cowled heads turned to watch us, or the white V-shaped tail-feathers flashed as the juncos flew from us. The white-throated sparrows were almost always with them, coming, I doubt not, from the same breeding-grounds, and bent upon reaching the same winter-quarters, or havens even farther south than those which juncos like. Now and then a white-crowned sparrow is to be seen among flocks of this kind. Those who watch for them are apt to see many white-throats, which they try to persuade themselves are the rarer species, but when the eye at last rests upon a white-crown there is no doubting his identity.

The golden-crested kinglets were present in great numbers on the same 13th of October, 1889, and as they passed through the evergreens they accomplished a marvelous amount of effective house-cleaning. With them or near them chickadees, red nuthatches, white nuthatches, and brown creepers took part in the keen inspection of the trees, and woe came to the insect which fell under their eyes.

Among the other birds which I recorded that day were robins, a hermit thrush, bluebirds, yellow-rumped warblers, solitary vireos, a flock of thirty-five goldfinches, a good many sparrows of various kinds, blue jays, one or two kinds of woodpeckers, several hawks, and a flock of black ducks. They formed the rear guard of the grand army, and as the leaves rustled down over them it was easy to imagine snowflakes gathering in the northern clouds and waiting for a summons to begin their soft descent upon the abandoned earth.

Bird voices sometimes mingle with the hum and roar of my duty-wheel. Opposite my office window are two tall pine-trees, almost the only evergreens in the college yard. These trees swarm with the alien sparrows, whose clamor at times is almost deafening. Better three months of utter silence than such bird music as this. Each year, as autumn deepens into winter, I



watch the immigrant sparrow to see whether he is not learning that migration southward in the season of snow is wise and comfortable. He does wander somewhat, already, when food fails, and it will not be strange if, as years pass, he should acquire by sympathetic vibration something of the swing of the migratory pendulum.

When I walk slowly home from my office past Christ Church and the silent field of quaintly lettered stones, past the old elm within whose shade Washington took command of the Colonial army, and past Cotton Mather's gold chalice holding high his ancient head against the rosy afterglow, I seem to see beyond all these things the crouching lion of Chocorua. Waking or dreaming, the outline of that peak is always stamped upon my northern horizon, and the north is the point to which my face turns as surely as does the needle, whenever my face, like the needle, is left to settle its direction in accordance with its controlling affinities. In these October days the picture of Chocorua which haunts me is not a summer picture. Far from it. In it the leaves are falling, drifting down like snow, birds are silent, nervous, always on the alert for danger; new ledges show upon the mountain-sides, new vistas have opened through the forests, and spots which, when behind their August leaf mantles seemed dark and



secret, are now as open as the day. The brooks are more noisy, and easily seen, the grouse fly afar off; if one wishes a flower he must pluck the witch-hazel or let the bitter yarrow or the last clusters of goldenrod and asters satisfy him. Nature seems preoccupied and inclined to tell the visitor to see what he wants, and to take what he can find, but to let her alone.

## THE VINTAGE OF THE LEAVES.

FRIDAY, October 21, was observed by Harvard University as a holiday, — Columbus, while hunting for something else, having on that day, four hundred years ago, rediscovered America for the Europeans. On the same day, four hundred years ago, the Americans discovered Columbus, a weary and worn mariner, nearing the shore in a small and feebly-rigged ship. At that time America was much more of a boon to the explorer than he seemed likely to be to the continent.

I left Cambridge about the time the sun reached it, and gained the valley of the Bearcamp at 1 P. M. There are some days in the year which seem to have happened upon the wrong calendar day. They are too cold or too warm to keep company with the days which go before and after. This was not one of them. It was a model late October day, with clear air, a rushing wind, dark blue-gray clouds moving fast across a pale blue sky, leaves flying before the wind, and with ruffled water full of cold lights, though in spots increasing in its reflec-

tions the blue of the sky. Marvelous colors were spread upon the face of the meadows, and crept up the sides of the hills. The world was in gay attire, gayer even than the towns this day decked out in honor of the Genoese.

Gazing out of the train window, I have seen the Sandwich range from afar over the melting greens of spring, the rich verdure of summer, and the cold, still snow of winter. To-day I saw it framed in russet and carmine, — the colors of the oak-clad hills of Wakefield. The peak of Chocorua was capped by a dark slate-colored cloud from which rain seemed to be falling. Behind or above the other mountains of the range the same threatening vapors hung. As the train sped onward, past Ossipee Lake, over the Bearcamp, and up to the West Ossipee station, the clouds rolled away and a flood of clear sunlight poured its revealing rays into the hidden colors of the distant forests. From cold, dark masses in which black rocks were no darker than gloomy groves, the mountains' sides suddenly became aglow with warm tones. The far-reaching view suggested a painter's palette, upon which he had been daubing his colors from the tubes. Here he laid on a mass of dark green, there crimson, and next to it pale yellow. Then buff and orange, scarlet and blood-red pleased him, and he rubbed them upon spare

areas. Cobalt and ultramarine added here and there, with now and then a dash of silvery white or a broad band of burnt sienna, served to make the scarlets more intense and the yellows more aggressive.

Driving in an open wagon from West Ossipee to the Chocorua House, I found a heavy overcoat, warm gloves, and a fur robe essential to comfort, especially on coming from the steam-heated cars into the racing northwest wind. As we sped through groves and across meadows, my eyes devoured the wonderful coloring of all that had once been green. I could see nothing else, think of nothing else. The contrast to our summer coloring could not have been much sharper if I had been transported to the sanguinary groves and pastures of the red planet Mars. Even the birds which rose from the roadside and whirled away before the wind seemed less interesting, so absorbing were the marvels of coloring in foliage from ancient oak to tender grasses. A flock of birds seemed to dance through the sunlight across the road, yet when I looked after them they were only beech leaves hurried along by the wind. A cloud of leaves, picked up by an eddy of the air and tossed high above the trees, suddenly became bluebirds and sparrows speeding away from the wagon across the pasture. Crows, few in

number, and unusually wary, were not so easily mistaken for leaves, nor were the robins, which occasionally rose in flocks from the grass and sought the branches of leafless maples or butter-nuts.

After a hasty dinner I left the hotel and crossed field and copse to the outlet of the Chocorua lakes. The third lake, with its deep, dark water and its grove of lofty white pines shutting it in from distant views, is one of the most daintily lovely nooks in this region of beauty and grandeur. Crows love the dark pines, wild ducks float in their shadows, and many a mink has been trapped at the end of the dam. I found no life stirring in woods or water, so stepping cautiously along the mouldering logs of the dam, I gained the farther shore and crossed a broad, rock-strewn pasture, once covered by a growth of lofty pines. I know not how many years ago they fell or were felled, but this I do know, that scores of pitch-soaked knots are hidden in their ruins and among the ferns and bushes which have sprung from the decaying stumps. Many is the winter evening in town that I have sat by the fireside and gazed into the red flame of the blazing "light-wood" gathered in happy October days from this old pasture. As the pitch grew hot and burst through the dry wood, whining and

whistling, blowing out long jets of white smoke and slender tongues of flame, its voice and warmth have carried me back in spirit to the brown beds of fern, the busy chipmunks under the old oak in the wall, or to the mayflowers gathered in spring from the edges of the lingering snow-banks. I passed a ledge of rocks on which I had seen a woodchuck sunning himself last August, and I recalled how he had squeezed himself into a little cave in the ledge only to find me peering in after him, and quite able to reach him with a stick. His method of escape from me was characteristic. Grunting and snarling, he spent half his time in threatening to come out and attack me, and the other half in undermining himself and poking the earth with his nose into the hole through which I was looking. In five minutes he had completely covered the opening and sunk his plump body out of reach of my probe. Later in the season I had a young woodchuck which had been partly tamed escape from captivity by gnawing his way through a thick pine board. The same individual repeatedly climbed up six feet from the floor on the coarse wire netting which formed the front of his cage, so that in future I shall not think it strange if I see a woodchuck climb a tree. His eccentricity also carried him to the point of devouring nearly a third of the

carcass of a freshly-killed red squirrel, although an abundance of clover and young vegetables were close at hand ready for his dinner.

My walk took me up the western side of the lake to my own land and cottage. Robins rose from the ground in small flocks, a few tree sparrows and juncos flew from a plowed field by the wall, and two crows were feeding on swampy ground by a brook. It was to them that the land really belonged, not to me, — a waif from the city. So a flock of white-throats thought, as I disturbed them feeding upon the chaff at the back door of my barn. They flew into a bush on which a few dry leaves swung. While still watching them, as I supposed, I discovered that they had vanished, the wagging leaves alone remaining. In the orchard a few red apples hung, and gleamed like polished stones. One which grew upon a wild tree in the edge of the wood swung near the ground, and sharp little teeth had bitten out pieces from its side. Some of the fruit which lay upon the ground had been gnawed away until its seeds could be reached. Man eats the pulp and throws away the seeds, the mice and squirrels waste the pericarp solely to gain the seeds. Perhaps in this case man would have thrown away both apple and seeds had he tasted the bitter, wild fruit.

The lake was lower by a foot than I had ever before seen it in the autumn. In August it had washed the bushes on its dikes; now a yard or more of sand tempted a stroller to follow its fair rim past wood and meadow. Along my shore of the lake the natural dike is in places fully seven feet high. It has been made during the centuries by the "thrust" of the ice which results from the expansion of the ice-field by day following its contraction by night. On a sandy shore the expanding ice pushes up a little ridge of silt, and works it higher and higher as the ice mass rises during the winter. If the edge of the ice meets an obstacle, it is apt to break at a foot or more from the shore, and the pieces, still carrying their load of gravel, are shoved up the bank to its top, until, as years roll by, the dike is made too high to receive further additions.

The lake in summer is certain to be stirring with life. Insects upon and over the water, fish, frogs, birds, muskrats, and often large animals are in sight and moving both by day and by night. Now, as the waning sun grew pale behind the birches, no living creature moved. The yellow leaves drifted out upon the breeze, and kept on drifting across the ruffled water. Nothing cared where they drifted. They were dead, and just then all the world seemed full of falling, drifting leaves, with no



one to notice them or care for them. Were they to blame for the feeling of sadness which crept over me as the sun went down and the first chill of night came into the air? Or was it the absence of those who might, had they been by the lake, have enjoyed the placid twilight with me? No lights gleamed behind the closed blinds of my home, no fire crackled upon the hearth. Those whom I loved were far away in the city. Leaves were falling in the city, birds had fled from it as well as from the mountains. Chilly night had fallen there too, and with it came, not the sweetness of clear streams and pine groves, but the foul breath of the Charles and of Alewife Brook, open sewers of filthy towns. No, it was not the sadness of the season or the influence of drifting leaves which cast a little shadow over my enjoyment of the exquisite scene before me. It was regret at being alone in its presence and of having to leave it so soon in favor of desk and drudgery.

At ten minutes past five, planets sparkled in the silvery sky, yet a mile away the colors of oaks and poplars still burned their way to me through the clear air. As I walked back to the hotel, I noticed more clearly the number of trees which had lost their leaves. By daylight they were inconspicuous, flanked and backed as they had been by evergreens and trees full of

showy color. Now they reared their skeleton arms against the sky, making some parts of the way seem as desolate as in winter. Many of the goldenrods, asters, and immortelles contributed to the wintriness of the scene, for only dry white phantoms of their once cheerful flowers remained upon their stalks. The soft air with only a trace of cold in it belied these signs of winter, and so did the occasional note of a locust. From the little rustic bridge between the large and second lakes, the evening view of the mountains was bewitching. If a hermit thrush could have sung even one phrase of his holy music, I might have felt satisfied; but no bird was there to sing, and only the waves lapping upon the pebbles and the breeze sighing in the pines broke the silence of the starlit night. A leaf came sailing down the lake and passed under the bridge. Its little life as a green leaf was over. It had served the tree which bore it, and now its parched body was given to the stream to be borne away wherever wind and current decided. Was it, then, dead for all time? Ask this of the coal which glows in the grate, the oil which burns in the lamp, or the mayflower whose roots spread through the leaf mould in the forest. Where was this leaf a year ago, or a century ago? As certainly as the parts of this leaf have endured thus far, so certainly will

they continue to endure in ages to come. It seems equally sure that if there is a something in me which will not and cannot in time be made into leaves to wither and go down-stream with the wind, then that something will necessarily have as good a chance as the leaf to go down a stream of its own and bring up safely where it can be used again in endless cycles.

The voices of young chickens awoke me next morning, and mingling with their melancholy peeping came the wailing of a northeast wind as it struggled through a window crack. Bed was warm and my watch said it was only six o'clock. I peeped through my blinds and saw that the piazza roof seemed to be shining with rain. Nothing but the momentum of a previous determination to open my shutters led my finger to press the snap and let the wind swing the blind from me; for by the dismal shining of the rain my mind had been completely robbed of any wish to see the sky. The blind slammed against the clapboards and a bewildering sea of color surged across my vision. Instead of a waste of gray mist and dull wet field, I saw six mountains set against a silver sky; and rolling from them towards me, line after line of wave-like wooded ridges and pasture slopes, each more brilliant in coloring than the last. The sunlight was just touching a solitary cloud

which floated feather-like above Paugus, and a delicate sea-shell pink suffused it. Some of the same radiance fell upon the granite peak of Chocorua, floated over the highest ridges of spruce-hung Paugus and Passaconaway, warmed the naked shoulder of Whiteface, and touched even the dark head of the Sandwich Dome rising from the Pemigewasset forests. The flanks of these mountains and the whole of Mount Whittier, which rose in the southwest, were violet. A moment before they might have been dark purple, but now the rosy rays of dawn were stealing down them swiftly. I had scarcely time to note the wealth of suppressed color which lay upon the wave-like hills between me and the mountains, or to spring to my north window, fling its blinds wide open, and see the lake so ruffled by the wind and so hidden from the coming dawn as to be only the quicksilver side of the mirror, before the sunlight began creeping down the mountain-sides.

It is a pretty sight in the twilight or darkness to see a rosy edge of flame play along the margin of a sheet of burning paper, slowly devouring it. Some parts of the paper burn more brightly than others, but the whole line of advancing fire is beautiful and animating. So it was with the line of sunlight slowly passing from the rosy crests of the high mountains,

downward, with even march across their flanks, their projecting spurs, then the nearer hills, the lake, and river hollow, and finally over the great reach of woods and field nearest to me. In summer nearly the whole of this wide landscape is green or grayish green. In winter it is white, grayish brown, and dark green. Early autumn dots the woods with vivid points of scarlet and gold which stand out sharply from the mass of green; but as the sunlight crept downward over this late October foliage the prevailing color, which glowed forth full of strength, warmth, and meaning, was red, — the red of dregs of wine, of iron rust, of sleek kine, of blood. Intermingled with it were bits of golden or of sulphur yellow, marking birches and poplars, and in the pastures a few maples late in turning blazed with fiery scarlet as their fellows had weeks earlier.

The warmest of the color came from the oaks, but the beeches supported them with generous pigments, and so did the masses of blackberry vines, choke-cherry and huckleberry bushes, and other small shrubs which had turned crimson, red, or madder-brown under the October sun. Sweet-fern bushes, brakes, ferns, pine needles, many of the grasses, and most of the fallen leaves constituting the greater part of the earth's carpet, answered the sun's

greeting by showing broad expanses of brown, ranging from burnt umber to dark straw color.

Near the lake were many pines, and as the light reached them they seemed to grow higher, broader, nearer, and to shed into the surrounding air something of their steadfastness and strength. They change not, falter not, fail not, come what may to their deciduous neighbors. In this northern land they are a symbol of constancy and faith. No one can look at a pine-tree in winter without knowing that spring will come again in due time. The lake itself soon shared in the flood of color brought out by the sun. Most of its surface was ruffled by the breeze, but at points where the high pines sheltered the water and left it rippleless, the mountain-sides mirrored themselves, and the reflection was red like wine.

As the sun rose higher above the hill behind me, and cast its rays against the west, more and more from above, and less from a level, the colors in the landscape became less vivid, and leafless trees, birch trunks, and softer tints in general, blended with the maroons and browns, toning them down and flattening them, until the prevailing coloring on the mountain slopes became like the bloom on the cheek of a plum; and even the brighter, stronger tints in the nearer view grew softer and dimmer.

After breakfast I climbed the ridge behind the Chocorua House and sought a small beech grove on its crest. In the pasture one of the hawkweeds, two goldenrods, autumn buttercups, yarrow, the red and the white clover were still in bloom, sparingly, of course, and only in warm corners, but still clinging bravely to sunlight and life. Crickets and small green locusts were active and noisy. They frequented hollows in the pasture surface, where beech leaves had blown and lodged among the dry and matted fern fronds. Lying in one of these hollows, which made a warm dry cradle, I watched the locusts hopping from leaf to leaf, crawling along the warm faces of lichen-cruste**d** boulders, and now and then working their bent legs up and down, while their fine, strident music fretted upon my ear. Some were green, some brown, both large and small, some almost buff, tiny, and very agile. They were not the only insects enjoying the sunlight, for spiders, house-flies, now and then a bee, small, gauzy-winged flies, and many a queer and, to me, nameless thing, with nervous antennæ, passed that way by wing or foot. At a spring in the woods where I drank of icy water, countless hosts of springtails or bristletails skipped, in sprightly humor, over the leaves and the surface of the pool. About noon I saw a



dragonfly dart past, and later a solitary ant crawl slowly across a patch of sand. No butterflies came to me, yet they were still abundant in Cambridge.

There was no chill in the air which surged over the hilltop. It was soft and caressing, yet so cool that thick clothing or constant exercise was needed to keep warm. Its perfect dryness made it seem less cool than it really was. The sky was wonderfully blue, and it lent its marvelous color to the lake. I have a friend who says that March water is bluer than any other. It certainly carries its blueness straighter into the heart than any other, but as I looked at Chocorua Lake from the hilltop it seemed to me that it could not be any bluer than it was, framed in glossy pines on the one hand, and in golden brown and wine color on the other. The wind was rough with the lake this morning. Striking it suddenly at the far north end, near where my well-loved home stands silent and deserted in the old orchard, it darkened the clear blue into angry flaw-lines and hurried them down the long mile towards the bridge, against which it hurled them in white-capped waves. I laughed as I watched one of the white-edged squalls pass down the length of the lake, for it reminded me of a day in mid-winter when I attempted to cross the lake near



its middle, carrying my pet owl "Puffy" perched upon my gun-barrel. A squall came over the white ice, bearing stinging snow-dust in its van; it caught Puffy from his perch and set him down upon the ice with feet helplessly spread, and then as he opened his wings and tail and struggled in the breeze, it spun him southward, sliding and rolling, poor wisp of feathers that he was, until he was landed, more dead than alive, in the woods on the southern shore.

The pines below my breezy hilltop tempted me by their music into their aisles. Under them was spread the new carpet of their needles, dry, warm, and tempting as a couch of eider-down. The wind sang in their tops, oh so sweetly, and it took me back to the moment in my earliest childhood when I was first conscious of that soft, soothing music. I do not know when it was, nor where it was, nor how young I may have been, but I can recall as from an almost infinite distance the memory of a sudden feeling of happiness at hearing the voice of the pines, and knowing that it was something kind and soothing. If we are in tune with Nature, all her music can find a way into the heart and satisfy something there which yearns for it, and never can be wholly happy without it. The man who trembles at thunder is more to be pitied than the poor Esquimau who was fright-

ened the other day by the crash of orchestral music at a Boston theatre.

While I listened to the pines a chickadee sang his phœbe-note. It was but once, but it told of his happiness as he bustled about in the dark pine wood from which warbler and vireo had departed, and upon which before many days the first snows of winter are to fall. Brave little titmice! they are among the sturdiest of New England's sons.

In the heart of the pines stands a house. I well remember the gray autumn morning when three of us, on a Thanksgiving holiday, staked out its foundation lines in the thin snow and drifted leaves. We tramped back and forth among the trees, now higher, now lower, then a little to the left, then more to the right. The peak of Chocorua must clear those monster pines; that bunch of low pines must be left low enough to give a free view of the large lake, and finally the young trees rising on the left must not on any account cover the charming glimpse of the third lake with its grove. At last we settled the spot, and drove our first stakes, fingered the long brass tape and drove more stakes. Our hands, ears, and noses were cold, but it was rare sport settling just where that new home should be planted among the singing pines.

To this house, deserted like my own sunny

cottage, I took my way. Ascending its steps, I stood within its lofty, granite-walled piazza, as romantic a spot, with its three arched openings facing westward, as a screened loggia overlooking fair Maggiore's azure waves. High above and out of sight of the road, embowered in the forest, and with the very essence of the exquisite Chocorua landscape framed in its arches, this house might well attract me and draw me, even from the singing pines, to linger the rest of the forenoon above its terraces. Bees and locusts made music in the sunlight, flaming geraniums bloomed at the foot of the castle wall, the perfume of sweet peas still in full flower hung lightly in the air, and upon one of the stone columns of the arches, morning-glories, unharmed by the several frosts which had wrought havoc with other tender plants, turned their filmy blossoms towards the sun. Society with its present habits is to blame for the desertion of such a home as this on such a day as this, when Nature is at her loveliest. Why is it that all New England which has brains, money, or philanthropy thinks the city the one proper sphere for life in all save a few weeks given grudgingly to rest? The cities are too large, too rich in human forces. They are debasing our New England stock, draining away the best of our vitality in their too nervous life. If a third of their

population could be sown into the fallow places in the hill country, their own competition would become a less fatal flame, and the country districts, instead of steadily degenerating in physical, moral, and intellectual tone, would again become prolific in healthy men and women.

So far as I know, the word "moor" is not applied to any part of our New England scenery; yet there are dry, comparatively treeless uplands, wind-swept and dotted with bogs which closely resemble English moorland. I climbed to the level of one early in the afternoon and strolled along its rough surface. At the first bit of bog that I struck a wood-frog jumped across the path. He was listless, and made but short leaps. When I followed him he plunged beneath a log which lay in the cold mud. Beyond, on dry ground, a grouse rose noisily from low cover and flew far before going out of sight. As I crossed some stony ground a mouse ran from me and hid between two boulders. Blocking both entrances to his hiding-place with my feet, I tilted one rock away from the other. The mouse darted first towards one of my feet and then towards the other. He dared not cross either, for I kept them moving. So he remained trembling in the middle. He was *Hesperomys*, the deer mouse, big-eyed and white-footed. I left him unharmed.

Following the edge of my moor, I came to a little glen which cut deeply into its side. A few acres of bog fed a little brook that passed through the glen on its way to the river. The ravine was heavily wooded, mainly with tall and unusually slender beeches. Descending into this grove was like entering the halo which the sunlight of Paris, shining through golden-tinted glass, casts around the tomb of Napoleon in the chapel of the Hôtel des Invalides. The rushing of the wind in the dry leaves filled the glen with sweet, soothing sounds; the sun warmed it and suffused it with radiance; and a deep bed of beech leaves gathered in a hollow offered a couch too tempting to be passed by. Every sense was gratified in this abode of music and color, for a faint perfume came from the leaves, telling of ripening and the fulfillment of nature's purposes. At ease in the drifted leaves, I watched the tree-tops bending before the gusts. One moment the golden roof of foliage concealed the sky; the next, as every lofty head inclined, wide areas of distant ether appeared, only to vanish again under the rhythmic movement of the trees. The gusts kept the air well filled with falling, fluttering fragments of the golden roof. Hundreds of leaves were often in the air at once, parting company from hundreds of thousands still upon the branches, but going

to join<sup>s</sup> legions already on the ground, waiting there the soft tyranny of the snow.

In the midst of the beeches stood a lofty hemlock. The owner of this wood had chosen it for his castle. About thirty feet from the ground at a point where several limbs diverged from the main trunk a nest was securely fixed. Perhaps an inexperienced eye would have taken it for a bird's nest. It may have been a bird's nest originally. Now the mass of dead beech leaves heaped upon it and woven into its fabric, making it a conspicuous object from every point of view, proclaimed it to be the home of a gray squirrel. Winds may blow, and rain, hail, and snow fall, but that nest will rest secure against the hemlock's trunk, under the thatched roof of hemlock branches. Early in September I found a new nest of this kind in a large beech-tree, and upon opening it made a discovery. The compressed green beech leaves gave out a strong, aromatic odor which I at once recognized as one of which I had often obtained whiffs in walking through the beech woods, but which I never had been able to assign to any flower or shrub.

In the lulls between the wind's gusts I could hear the tinkling of a brook at the bottom of the glen. Peering into the gloom below, where hemlock bushes overshadowed the stream's bed,

I sought for a gleam of water. Not a drop was to be seen. I descended, following the sound of the falling drops, and came to a perpendicular ledge at the upper end of the ravine. There was no mistaking the direction of the music; it came from the face of the rocks and the pile of débris at its bottom. Still not a drop of water could be seen. The falling beech leaves had completely covered brook and fall, pool and rock, but behind their veil the water went on with its singing. It will do the same, brave little rill! when snow covers the leaves and ice forms above and below the snow. The sweet jingling notes will be muffled, but they will be sung all the same.

Of course I drank from the brook, sweeping away the encumbering leaves from the top of the fall to get the water just where it rushed most swiftly. Not to drink from a New Hampshire brook is almost as much of a slight as not to bow to a friend, or not to kiss a little child when she lifts her face for the good-night caress which she thinks all the world is ready and worthy to give to little children. Refreshed, I clambered up the other side of the glen and regained the open moorland, and the glorious, rushing wind. Across the valley the old river terraces stood out as sharply as steps cut in the face of the hill. To have cut those fair out-



lines there must have been more water flowing out of Chocorua lakes in the olden time than flows from them now. Perhaps in those days Ossipee Lake washed these very terraces.

Coming to another deep cleft in the side of the moor, I hesitated whether to run down one grassy slope, a hundred feet and more, and then up the other slope, or to go round. Precedent decided me to go round. About six feet below the edge of the bank a narrow well-trodden path skirted the ravine, going to its head, crossing at the same level and following along just below the edge of the opposite bank. Sometimes a well-turfed bank in a pasture where food is not abundant will be scored by many paths of this kind, one below another. They are made by the cattle, for a cow never will go down a steep incline if, without too great exertion, she can keep her four feet approximately on a level.

When I gained the southern end of the moor-like ridge, two villages lay before me, one on the left, the other on the right. One was the home of the dead, the other the toiling-ground of the living. They can see each other, and year by year the village on the hill grows larger, and that in the valley grows smaller. When the venerable village postmaster was suddenly turned out of office a few years ago against the public wishes, but in obedience to



the infamous "spoils" policy, he was commiserated with for his hard fortune. "Yes," he said, "it is hard, but I knew it was coming, and bless your soul, the time is near when I shall be turned out of this house too, and told to let some other fellow rotate in and get warm. But, my friend, there is a house of mine up yonder on the hill where politics and money don't count, and when this world seems unkind I look up there and say to myself, 'Pretty soon, pretty soon.'"

While waiting for the mail wagon to come down the Ossipee road, over the red bridge and up the hill to the store, I plucked individual leaves from trees and bushes, and marveled over their many ways of changing from pliant green to crackling brown. One of the most brilliant shrubs near the road was a blueberry. Its leaves were crimson, tending towards scarlet, and their surface was as brilliant as satin. The blackberry, which in some lights seemed as bright as the blueberry, was more of a wine color, and it had a duller surface. Some of the viburnum leaves were rich red on their upper faces, but pale below, their mid-vein being pink, and a greenish tone pervading their under surface. Others, shaped like maple leaves, were of a singular color, — a kind of pinkish purple. An oak leaf, plucked from a young

bush not many years out of the acorn, was the color of newly-shed blood in its centre, but many small detached areas upon it remained green. From a sucker shoot of a poplar I gathered several strangely effective leaves. One was of sulphur yellow coarsely spotted with black dots; another was blackish brown with crimson veinings above, and clear yellowish white veinings below, — a most unique combination. From an adjoining poplar I picked one uniformly black over three quarters of its area, but blotched with vivid green near its apex. Its veins were yellowish white both above and below. The clusters of lambkill leaves were very pretty. While the upper surfaces of the leaves were faded vermilion or pinkish salmon color, the under sides were buff, or very pale sage green. The willow leaves were queer, damaged looking things, a good deal nibbled by insects and much splashed with dark brown upon a yellowish olive groundwork. A bunch of violet leaves were clear golden yellow, while some of the more delicate ferns were nearly white. Truly the botanists have many pleasant problems before them if they are ever to ascertain why some green leaves turn black, and others brown, orange, yellow, red, purple, or white.

An inspection of the mail led me to walk

rapidly back to the Chocorua House and pack my bag for a return journey to the city. As I drove southward the mountains, seen across the pine barrens, were veiled in haze. The wind seemed chiding me for going away so abruptly from this paradise of color. Again and again I looked back at my favorite peaks and forests, printing more and more deeply in my mind the recollection of their noble outlines and remarkable coloring. Finally from the platform of the rear car I saw them over the Bearcamp meadows, and above and beyond them, with its cloud-cap just drifting away to the eastward, Mount Washington, benignantly presiding over the northern sky. Then the train rumbled across the Bearcamp trestle and the shadow of the Ossipee hills fell upon us and deepened into night.

## CHOCORUA IN NOVEMBER.

IN Cambridge, Saturday, the 5th of November, began its daylight in a driving snowstorm. The long, dry, sunny month of October was, as the farmers had prophesied, to be followed by a real old-fashioned, early and hard New England winter. By ten o'clock the warm sun and brisk northwest wind had dissipated the snow, and bad-weather prophets were silent. Not for long, however, for at noon the ground was again white, and as I crossed West Boston Bridge on my way to the train, the Back Bay was swept by a fierce wind which carried the spray from its gray-green waves half over the bridge piers, and into the level gravel walks on Charlesbank. My friends looked at me pityingly when I said that I was bound for the White Mountains, and asked whether I was not going to take my snowshoes.

Oddly enough, on reaching Portsmouth, having traveled to that point through dizzy myriads of flakes of the stickiest kind of snow, I found the sun brightly shining, and no snow visible on the Kittery pastures. Not until we were within

sight of the hills which bound the Bearcamp valley on the south did snow again greet my eyes, and then it was confined to the highlands.

My last trip had been such a revel in color that I found myself noticing tints more than other beauties in the ever-varying landscape through which the train flew shuttle-wise. A great change had come over the face of nature in the fortnight which had fled since my last visit. November was written in subdued tones where October had burned before. The birch groves were no longer filled with pale lambent flames. Their yellow leaves had all fallen, and their massed twigs needed the full power of the sun to show that behind their dull gray shading lurked the subdued color of the plum. Even darker, and without warm undertones, were the alder thickets, more black than gray. The larches were still pure gold, wonderful in their happy contrast to the pines and spruces. The apple-trees retained their full suit of leaves, sometimes touched with a golden light, often perfectly green. Under them the grass was generally as verdant as in spring. Barberries hung in dense masses in their bushes; the American holly berries blazed with scarlet, and here and there in the dull forest a gleam of crimson told of a blueberry or amelanchier bush. As the train whirled across wood-paths, they

showed as yellowish stripes in the forest. The drifted beech leaves gave them tone. In the gloom of the matted alders, fuzzy balls of soiled wool seemed to have lodged. They were the flowers of the white clematis, gone to seed. Somewhat similar but thinner masses clung to the stalks of the fireweed.

As the wind swept across a cornfield from which all but the stalks with one or two flaxen leaves had been stripped, the long leaves streamed and flapped before the breeze like yacht pennants. In the orchards piles of red and of yellow apples shone in the sunlight, and when one still depended from the tree it was as bright as a gilt ball on a Christmas-tree.

The oaks still held their leaves stubbornly, but the blood had gone from them and their color was of tanned leather, deepening in places to a dull maroon. The dry stubble fields, closely cropped mowings, and rank meadows were all aglow with evenly spread color. The stubble fields were purplish, the fields pale yellow, and the meadows deep straw color. Masses of goldenrod stalks were well named, for they were golden brown. Their leaves were dull brown. If as the train dashed between gravel banks I caught a flash of crimson on the sand, I knew that blueberry bushes had caught root there.

The daylight faded early, but as the sun sank it poured more and more color into the hills. Reflected rays danced from the window-panes of farmhouses on the high slopes to the east of the track. Such glimpses of isolated buildings have a flavor of home and snugness which no city suggests. The absence of leaves and the presence of many shadows cast by the low November sun revealed more clearly than usual the pleasing contours of glacial hills and their eroded sides. Most of the gravelly products of the glacier are graceful in outline, composed of easy curves or gentle undulations. Not only are the sky lines grateful to the eye, but those which curve forward and back along the line of vision have in them the element of beauty. The cutting of banks by streams leaves many a gentle terrace which advances, retreats, now makes a bold front, the next moment shrinks away in a bow-shaped bay. Ice and water seem to abhor straight lines, but to love rhythmic motion. Upon a small glacial mound shaped like a beehive stood a single pine, brave-limbed and lichen-grown. I have noticed it for years, and something in its pose always suggests "The Monarch of the Glen," with head erect and every sense alert. It was much fuller of animation than the flock of dingy sheep which at first sight I thought to be moss-covered boulders.

The sun set not long after four o'clock, and the sky borrowed from it fleeting rosy light. Then the yellow-white steam from the engine billowed past my window, and through it shone the blue-white snow, making the steam seem soiled. As I looked forward at fields which we were approaching, no snow was to be seen, yet as we passed them and I looked back upon the northern side of their inequalities they were wholly white.

When the lamps were lighted in the car my eyes rested, fascinated, upon the gilded axe which always hangs above the car door. Significant emblem of our civilization, which cynically takes unwarrantable risks with life, limb, and property, in order that man may increase his misery by perpetually hurrying!

The gleam of Six Mile Pond told me that the train was in Madison. A moment later I was standing in the crisp night air knocking for supper at the tavern door.

When we say "It is two miles from Madison to Tamworth Iron Works," we do not tell the whole truth. It would be better to add, "over the top of Deer Hill." For years Madison has gone to Tamworth over Deer Hill, or else it has stayed at home and wished that Deer Hill was elsewhere. How long grim devotion to the one occupied farm on Deer Hill will force the



inhabitants of two townships to ignore the fact that a level road could readily unite them remains to be seen. Deer Hill given back to Charles's Wain as the only team enduring enough to travel steadily over it would be Deer Hill justly dealt with at last.

At seven o'clock I stood on the crest of this stumbling-block to progress and gazed at its view of sky and forest. The moon struggled with eastern cloud-banks. In the north, white clouds drifted over whiter mountain ridges. Once the peak of Chocorua peeped through its veil and caught upon its marble sides the radiance of the coy moon. After following the road to within a quarter of a mile of the Iron Works, I left it and struck northwestward across the moor towards the Chocorua House. Suddenly I saw an object upon the level stubble which suggested danger. For many years I have lived in dread of meeting and being pursued by a skunk at night. Had the moment arrived? Edging away from the object, I watched it keenly. Did it move? No. Yes! It was turning its head towards me and lifting that dreaded tail straight above its back. Still at least fifteen feet from the beast, I kept steadily on my way in a semicircle round it. The skunk revolved, keeping his head towards me, and then I saw his tail snapped forward irritably. I had

reached a stone wall, and, springing upon it, I hooted after the manner of owls, barked after the manner of dogs, and then fled after the manner of men. I neither saw nor smelt anything more of the skunk.

My way took me into the golden beech wood on the border of the moor. The moon, now free from clouds, shed a soft, dim light into the grove. Scarcely a leaf clung to the trees, but upon the ground they were heaped up ankle deep. As there had been crackling ice in all the pools in the road, it was not wonderful that the waters of the leaf-hidden brook were very cold.

An hour after leaving Madison I stood before an open birch-wood fire in Chocorua Cottage. Not only did its warmth appeal to my cheeks and fingers, but something in the whirl of its flames and the snap of its sparks made my heart beat more in tune with all the world.

The next morning I awoke at six o'clock and at once opened my blinds and raised my shades so that I could see the mountains both to the north and to the west. Not a cloud or a suspicion of haze marred the perfect blueness of the sky or the distinctness of the outlines of hills, trees, and boulders. The moon was still nearly three hours from her time of setting, and her light, almost as much as that of the unrisen sun,

contributed to the serene glow which filled the sky and fell softly upon the sleeping earth.

There is nothing in nature any whiter than snow, and as the peak and bare upper ledges of Chocorua were covered by an almost unbroken envelope of snow, no alpine horn ever gleamed with a fairer light than that which shone from Chocorua's summit. Paugus, Passaconaway, and Whiteface are usually dark by contrast to Chocorua, even in midwinter. To my surprise they were almost as white as the marble lion itself. Their spruces were coated with snow, which had frozen in masses to the needles, effectually covering the dark green by a gleaming surface of white.

As the sun neared the horizon, a faint rosy glow came into the western sky. Then it touched the snowy peaks, leaving them pale salmon color. Finally it crept down the mountain slopes, changing the silvery gray of the leafless forest masses into ashes-of-rose color, delightful to the eye.

It was a winter landscape, yet as the sun climbed higher into the cloudless sky, the soft still air was caressing in its warm touch upon the cheek. I looked curiously at the thermometer, not knowing whether it would say 25° or 60°. It stood at 30°, a temperature which, with a Boston east wind and a rainstorm, is

quite capable of freezing the love of life out of one's vitals. Feeling as buoyant as a cork, I dashed off after breakfast in search of something high to climb. An overcoat was unbearable, and my jersey was dispensed with by ten o'clock, leaving me comfortable in ordinary indoor costume. The air seemed full of life-giving quality, joy, health, hope. So thought the titmice, robins, tree sparrows, juncos, and kinglets, all of which were noisy and full of motion.

Speeding past the lakes, I stopped for a moment in my own orchard to lament the death of an osprey which I found at the foot of an apple-tree, where some hunters had left him. It is fortunate that all animals have not man's propensity for killing merely for the sake of killing. Here was a bird of beautiful plumage, wonderful powers of sight and flight, measuring only five inches less than six feet from wing tip to wing tip, practically harmless, and by no means common in these mountains, yet after being shot merely for love of murder, his body was left where it fell, to feed skunks and foxes. Small wonder that creation seems out of joint wherever man's influence extends.

My next stopping-place was the lonely lake, now more lonely than ever, for not a bird flew among its trees, and not a fin stirred in its green waters. Upon its mossy bank, marvelous to

relate, I found three fresh blossoms of the houstonia. Like the sweet peas at my cottage, the witch-hazel by the brook, and the tiny sprig of goldenrod picked in the pasture, these frail flowers had endured frosts by the dozen and a recent fall of snow which must have buried them several inches deep. Over them a red maple was doing its best to keep them company, for its crimson buds seemed as plump and full of color as they ought to be next March. A flower of another kind bloomed in profusion upon the sand close to the lake's rim. It was like frosted silver in sheen, and the sunbeams loved to play in its beautiful petals. How it grows I know not, but it comes up from the sand in a single night, rank by rank and cluster by cluster, often lifting up great masses of sand upon its spearheads. This flower is the ice flower, whose wonderful armies of needle-like crystals sprout under the influence of the frost from every damp mass of sand or gravel, ready to be crunched under foot in the morning as horse and man pass over the uplifted roads.

In the first brook which I passed beyond the pond I saw two small trout, the longer of the two being not over an inch and a half from snout to tail. They seemed to me to be a little sluggish, or rather a trifle less instantaneous than in warm months. Two or three green

locusts were also evidently depressed by the cool weather, and they played their tunes rarely and without much spirit. Listening to them and to the sounds which the wind made in a bunch of dry brakes, I fancied that I saw in what quarter the first grasshopper took his music lessons. The rubbing together of the parts of the withered fronds produced sounds almost exactly like the locust's strident playing.

Taking the Hammond path, I ascended the eastern spur of Chocorua. The side of the mountain was one vast bed of loosely scattered leaves. Next spring each leaf will be pressed so closely upon its neighbor that the veining of one will be imprinted upon the face of the other. Now they are still free to drift with wind eddies, and to rustle noisily around the feet of the passer-by. The smell of oak leaves, newly fallen, is very powerful, and, except as a reminder of autumn walks, too much like ink to be pleasant. Among the fallen leaves the bright green of checkerberry, club mosses, and wintergreen showed now and then, while the dark liver-colored leaves of a goldenrod contrasted with the brown of the beech leaves.

I must have climbed fully eight hundred feet from the level of the pastures before snow began to appear along the path, and it was not until the line of low spruces was gained that

the snow was continuous or at all deep. No sooner had I struck the snow area than I began to find evidence of the passing along and across the path of the creatures of the woods. In five or six places a fox had followed the path for several rods. Rabbits had crossed it over and over again, and mice even had recognized it as a thoroughfare and taken laborious journeys in its drifts.

A few minutes past noon I reached the top of Ball Mountain, or, as it is generally called, Bald Mountain. Here the snow lay four to eight inches deep upon everything except the bare ledges, which were dry and warm. As I gained the crest, a hawk sailed over me and out into that sea of space above the valley. What joy it must be to fly, and especially to soar and float, in high ether, with scarce a muscle moving! Suddenly a plaintive note fell upon my ear, and, turning, I saw a bird about the size of a robin flying northward. It soon vanished in the distance, I meanwhile striving to recall when, where, and from what bird I had heard that sad cry before. Hoping to see more birds, and seeking an uninterrupted view of the peak, I climbed to the top of the ledges intermediate between Bald Mountain and the foot of the peak, and there, upon a broad, dry face of granite, on the edge of the steep incline which



reaches far down into the eastern hollow of Chocorua, I rested and drew strength from the perfect peace of my surroundings.

The only sounds which I could hear, and they were only occasional, were produced by the fall of masses of snow from spruce limbs, and the sighing of the breeze in the tree-tops far below me in the ravine. When the wind ceased, the hush was wonderful. In so vast a space it seemed as though some voice of nature must make itself heard; but above, below, northward towards Canada, eastward towards the ocean, southward, where Winnepesaukee's waters were too dazzling to watch, and westward, among the snowy ravines of clustered mountains, all was absolute repose and silence. Not a bird or an insect was to be seen, and the stiff spruces were as motionless as the rock from which they sprang. The peak was the most forceful element in the landscape. It seemed the embodiment of cold, silent strength. Nine tenths of its surface were pure white snow, one tenth black rock, whose steep faces or sharp angles refused to hold the snow. Rising fifteen hundred feet above the ledges on which I sat, yet being not more than half a mile from me, its massive presence was not only impressive but oppressive. I felt as though it might fall and crush me to powder.



Across the eastern valley, filled with its white-stemmed birches and poplars, rose a forbidding line of snowy cliffs. Of all the buttresses which prop the peak, this lofty ridge of nude rock is the most inaccessible and sullen. Now and then a bear is seen traversing its dangerous faces in search of berries, but man rarely steps upon it. ever-visible but repellent heights.

Looking away from the sun, all the world was white or gray; looking towards it, deep violet tones predominated, while from between the hills many lakes flashed towards me the slanting, dazzling rays of the low-hanging sun. So dark was the south that I found it hard to realize that the hour was but one o'clock and the sky cloudless. In six weeks the sun will be even lower, the violet shadows deeper, and midwinter will rule the whole of the frozen land.

When I opened my lunch, a house-fly came to share it with me. Omnipresent and much enduring insect, for once he was welcome, and I felt as though a companion sat with me. In the rock upon which I rested there was a little rift, filled with water upon which floated a fish-shaped cake of ice. This was my punch-bowl, and never thirst found sweeter, purer draught for its quenching, than came from that heaven-filled and frost-cooled cup. I wanted to bless

it, but found it blessing me, for it was much to me, while I was nothing to it. Rift and rock were there before I took breath, and they will be there centuries after I am a vanished mote in the sky. Just as I left the ledge, homeward bound, a bird call rang out sharply. I listened and a low tremulous song came from the spruces. Sweeping their serrated border with my glass, I found the birds and recognized them ere they flew, uttering the same sad plaint I had heard an hour before. They were a pair of pine grosbeaks, "winter robins" as the farmers call them; one a male, with his rosy breast, the other his Quaker mate. Flinging themselves into space, they flew southwestward till my glass could follow them no longer.

Passing through the beech woods on my way down the mountain, I noticed how much more firmly the leaves clung to the young trees than to the older ones. Many of them, if pulled steadily by the tip, tore sooner than give way at the stalk. On oak and poplar sprouts or suckers, the leaves remain much longer than on old wood; they keep their rich coloring far into November, and they are often very conspicuous by reason of their great size.

I found more life stirring in these beech woods than anywhere else. Squirrels both red and gray were hard at work upon the ground,

gathering winter stores. A fine gray, on seeing me, scrambled to the high leafless limbs of an oak, becoming there much more conspicuous than he had been among the fallen leaves.

This autumn a farmer shot a gray squirrel and hung it in his shed. The cat stole the squirrel and shared it with her family. Next day, puss went gray-squirrel hunting, and to the farmer's astonishment captured her game and brought it home. The squirrel was so large that the cat, to avoid tripping over it, walked backwards much of the way, pulling it after her. Thus far for her thriving family puss is said to have secured six gray squirrels.

A friend of mine, while hunting this fall in a grove of oaks, noticed a large gray squirrel coming directly towards him through the woods, pursued by a red squirrel. Chickaree soon saw his danger and stopped, but the gray came slowly on, as though searching for something. The hunter stood motionless, wondering. Nearer and nearer came the inquisitive squirrel, until it reached the man's feet and sniffed at his gunstock. Its eyes seemed to have been injured or to be partially covered by a morbid growth. The moment the man moved in an effort to catch the creature alive, it bounded from him and disappeared.

The perfect clearness of the sky lasted until nightfall, then a narrow line of golden orange light separating a pale silvery sky from a deep violet earth was all there was of sunset.

## AMONG THE WIND-SWEPT LAKES.

THE first thing which I saw as I opened my eyes Monday morning was the tip of Passacon-away's pyramid, rosy with the sun's earliest rays, and hanging like a great pink moon between the soft gray of a hazy sky and the cold gray of the misty forests. It was a soft morning with a southerly wind and a cloudy sky, yet with a chill in the air which hinted of snow. As the damp wind swept across the snow-covered peak of Chocorua, its moisture was condensed, and from the rock, trailing away north-eastward like a huge white banner, a cloud streamer waved for an hour in the hurrying wind. Then the peak was overcome by the cloud and hidden for the rest of the day in a slowly thickening and descending pall.

In all the years which I had spent in wandering over these fair hills, I never had explored Whitton Pond. Looking down upon it from the snow-covered mountain yesterday, it had seemed so pleasant to the eye that I determined to view it from all sides, and to see the mighty form of Chocorua reflected in its clear waters.

Towards Whitton Pond, then, I directed my steps this gray morning.

Taking the Conway road from the Chocorua House, I walked northward upon it rather more than three miles to what is known far and near in this country as the Bell Schoolhouse in Albany. Perhaps the bell uses its tongue in dark nights when the wild storm-wind sweeps down from Chocorua, and the forest groans under its stripes. Certainly its tones are not heard in the sunlit hours, as the bats in its belfry and the spiders in its schoolroom can bear witness.

As I passed up the eastern side of Chocorua Lake, under the great pines which guard its shore, a flock of ducks rose from the water and flew towards the south, then wheeling, returned and vanished far in the north. There were seven of them, six flying neck and neck in an even row, and one lagging behind. The six were apparently snowy white with dark markings on heads and wings; the laggard was dark colored.

One often hears in February and March that signs of early spring are growing numerous, that red buds are swelling on the maples, catkins have come upon the alders, and that many another shrub or tree is pushing out its new life. Noticing the alder catkins swinging in the wind, I measured several and found them

already from an inch to an inch and a half long. Some of the maples were noticeably ruddy in tone, so thick and red were their buds. Lucky it is for the grouse that buds do not wait for winter to go, before they pack away the sweet food of life under their snug jackets. The grouse could give an eloquent lecture on the pledges of the spring renaissance which are made every autumn by the budding trees.

At the Bell Schoolhouse I took the right-hand road, crossed the Chocorua River, a slender run at this point, and almost immediately after turned again to the right, taking an old road leading eastward over the hills to Madison village. The road was a new one to me, but I knew that it led through one of the saddest regions in the Bearcamp valley. A generation ago the "North Division" was comparatively thickly settled. More than a dozen comfortable sets of buildings were tenanted on those sunny slopes. Children flocked to the little schoolhouse, corn rustled in the fields, and farmer's "gee" echoed back to farmer's "wah-hish" from the plowings or wood-lot. Now the porcupine and the skunk, the chimney swift and the adder are the undisputed owners of the deserted farms. The people have gone as though the plague had smitten the land, and houses, barns, fences, bridges, and well-sweeps are mouldering

away together. Why is it? Ask the West and the great cities, which between them have drawn the young blood from New England's rural families, leaving the old and feeble to struggle alone with life on the hills. A kinder region than this could be depopulated by such a process.

The most remote and the highest farm in the North Division shone, as we approached it, like a brass button. Carpenters, painters, and home-makers had been at work upon it until the hills and trees knew it for its old self no longer. Nevertheless it was as empty and silent as the decaying farmsteads below. Gazing from its terrace upon the far view of Ossipee Lake, the broad Bearcamp valley, and the semicircle of hills and mountains from Wakefield to Chocorua, I understood why its present owner came from the shores of Lake Michigan to spend his summer in its beautiful quiet.

Behind this redeemed fragment of the North Division rises a granite ledge, from which matchless views of many mountains, lakes, and sleepy hollows can be obtained. I found the ledge covered with snow, and the spruce woods on its steep northern slope as full of snow as the thickets on Chocorua's ridges. At this season a slight elevation and shade make all the difference between summer and winter.



From the ledge I could see the whole of Whitton Pond, lying just below me. It looked like a silver Maltese cross with its four arms reaching out to the four points of the compass. A small island and one or two single rocks rose from its surface. At least three bluff headlands, pine-crowned and rock-faced, stood out boldly into its waters. Just across its eastern side, and due north from the elevation upon which I was standing, rose an impressive hill whose precipitous southern side was formed of a series of polished ledges sloping directly towards the deep waters of the lake. In the depths below those ledges large trout are said to live in a state of haughty contempt for all except favored anglers. I once asked a native, presumably not a favorite of the Whitton Pond trout, whether he would advise me to go to the pond fishing. Turning his gray eye upon me, he said solemnly, "Young man, ef I had the ch'ice of fishing all day in Whitton Pond or in this sandy road, I 'd take the road every time."

A logging road led from the back of the ledge down to the pond. In the dark spruces near the water stood a tiny and dilapidated log hut and stable. So small was the hut, it seemed as though only one lumberman could have lived there. From the hut the road led straight to the lakeside, and to as lovely a view of the

eastern flank of Chocorua as can be won anywhere. All that I had imagined yesterday as I stood on those far ramparts was now made real. Here was the ruffled water, the pine-capped headlands, the guardian ledges; there was the stern fortress lifting its rock face and ragged outlines high against the sky. As the mists hurried over the peak, they suggested smoke from cannon fired from this Gibraltar of nature. Here and there spruces, standing in the clouds upon the edge of the precipice, looked like the dim forms of men guarding the heights.

As the water was very low, a narrow pebbly and rocky strip of beach offered an easy way round the lake. I followed it through the eastern coves to the northern shore, where the slippery ledges, one above another, hung over me. Many boulders of large size and odd outlines lay upon the shore, with the waves raised by the south wind splashing against them. Here the beach failed me, and I had to force my way westward through the woods and undergrowth to the outlet of the pond. Considering that the lake was about a mile square, the stream which escaped from it was singularly small. I crossed it with a single stride. At high water it is probably much larger, for a dozen or more great logs pushed far up on the rocks show that the

rivulet of to-day gives no suggestion of the force of water sometimes at work.

From the outlet to the highway was less than ten minutes' walk, a footpath bringing me to one of the many abandoned farms of unfortunate Albany. Unfortunate no longer, I hope, for with debt paid, taxes reduced, and lumbering on the decline, the township ought to revive, partly through ordinary settlement, but mainly through the influx of city people to one of the most beautiful spots in New Hampshire.

My walk back to the hotel took me round Chocorua Lake, while pictures of Whitton Pond were still vivid in my memory. I confess to a sudden feeling of jealousy for the newly explored pond when I looked at the simpler outlines of my favorite water, and wondered how a wooded island and bluff headlands would become it. Whitton Pond is certainly too exquisite a bit of nature to remain long a wilderness; while to give up its lofty ledges to quarrymen would be little less than a crime.

As I crossed the bridge between the lakes, the coloring was full of sadness. The long-deferred rain was coming across the mountains. Their tops were concealed, and only the dimmest, most tearful vision of their flanks remained. Gray and cold, cold and gray, mountain, sky, forest, and lake, all were the same.

The cry of a pileated woodpecker and the sputtering complaint of a Hudson Bay titmouse rang in my ears. Birds of the north, strangers to these cherished spots, why were they here? Why were their voices full of weird warning? The rain came softly, surely onward, over the glassy water, and with a shiver I hurried towards the fireside. After all, men, like birds and insects, flowers and leaves, feel the chill of autumn and tremble at it. Full as the season may be of eternal promise, it is charged also with a message of present death and decay. Leaves wither and fall, flowers drop their petals and turn to seeds, the locust dies in the grass, the bird takes wing and saves his life by finding a gentler clime in the far south, and man, if he is to linger under Chocorua's lee, must gather his corn into barns, pile his shed full of wood, and fortify his mind to endure long nights, intense cold, deep snows, the wailing of wintry winds, and the gruesome voice of the lake as the ice throttles it. If the heart is brave and serene, there is peace in the long nights, pleasure in the cold, joy in snowshoe races on the snow, and exhilaration in the wailing of the wind and the moaning of the lake. As the viking exulted in sailing his ship through the fierce gale of the north, so his offspring can find joy in the wintry breath of Chocorua.

## 'LECTION DAY, '92.

TUESDAY, the 8th of November, 1892, belongs to history now, but when it began it was only an ordinary 'lection day. Floods of night rain had washed the high peaks clear of snow, and at dawn the golden clouds swept eastward, and the fairest of November days began its course. All the horses and all the men turned their noses towards the wooden town-house in Tamworth village; and by nine o'clock long lines of wagons streamed under the two campaign flags, across the bridge over rushing Paugus River, and up to the stores where the smoke of pipes and the sound of laughter proclaimed the swarming of man. It was an occasion of more than usual interest, for not only was the great ex-president to test his tariff-reform lance against the silver shield of his once successful rival, but New Hampshire in general, and Tamworth in particular, were to try the Australian ballot system.

"Now, Jim," said the committee-man, "remember to make a cross against the name of every Democrat. Take your time, and look for

the letter D. Wherever you see D, put down your cross." Then a sample ballot was displayed to Jim, and that worthy child of Quebec proved the truth of his assertion that he could "read D in English evvy time, sir."

Just before ten, the three stores gave up their crowds in favor of the growing swarm in front of the town-house. It was a strange comingling of men. The bone and sinew of rural New England were there, and so were the gristle, the fat, and the lean. Men well past ninety tottered feebly to the benches which flanked the broad open floor of the hall. Young fellows, just of age, stepped briskly in and went to the platform to see that their names had been duly added to the printed check-list of voters. Gaunt, loose-jointed, thin-faced men, in worn shoddy, the modern successor of honest homespun, dragged themselves through the crowd, answering salutations with grim indifference. Big, burly men with broad, gray felt hats and scarlet flannel leggings strode in more confidently, fresh from the spruce woods. Well-dressed, clean-shaven men with city hats and big watch-chains shook hands with everybody, and with a hand on John's shoulder or Edson's elbow whispered a word in the young voter's ear. The New England farmer or lumberman does not ride horseback. He probably knows

how well enough, but his roads have no clay mud, his wagon runs easily, so he drives instead of riding. Not one man in fifty owns a saddle. Who is it, then, that comes up the long street at a breakneck pace, with flapping hat, trailing whip, and rattling spurs? He rides well, and has a dashing air about him strangely in contrast to the slouch of the man who always drives, with shoulders hunched and back curved. He proves to be a city man who has had enough of a ranch and is now extracting occupation from a farm and summer boarders.

Now a silk hat and a satin necktie loom up in the throng. They grace a sleek son of the town who has a store "down country," but who comes home to vote. The silk hat looks strangely out of place among the well-worn felts and woolen caps which cover most of the heads in the crowd.

The bell in the meeting-house tower moves, and then its clang strikes harshly on the ear. Half a mile away it would be sweet-toned; here it is merely discordant. The men straggle into the town-house in large groups, and soon the room is crowded. Good air goes out by the chimney when the smokers come in by the door. The supervisors are in their seats, and an excited discussion is taking place in which they and many in the crowd join. An oldish man

and a foreigner who served in the late civil war has just produced his naturalization papers and demanded to have his name placed upon the check-list. The officers object, and point to the book of statutes open before them, where a section states that no name shall be added to the list at this late hour except by way of restoring a name wrongfully dropped from an earlier list. The claimant declares that his name was or ought to have been on an earlier list; a candidate for office springs upon a chair and shouts to the supervisors that he will "make it hot" for them if they refuse the veteran his suffrage; the crowd cheers, and the officers yield. Then the warrant for the meeting is read, and immediately after an elder offers prayer, the hats and caps being doffed in obedience to a loud call of "hats off." The prayer is simple and earnest, asking for help in a freeman's highest duty. A moderator is chosen, and he delivers a brief and clear lecture upon the machinery of the new ballot law. Then a resolution is passed with a shout, allowing the old men to vote first, and the graybeards are pushed gently forward to the inclosed space in which the five little voting booths are built.

The voters are kept waiting half an hour, because at first no one can open the patent ballot box, but at last it gives way to some persuasive



touch and the day's work is fairly begun. By noon about fifty men have passed the guard, taken their folded ballots, entered the little booths, and spent from two to ten minutes each in marking or trying to mark for their favorite candidates.

"This is a great thing for the fools," said an old farmer; "they can look just as wise as the wisest of us, but they nor nobody else will ever know just who they voted for."

One man, after entering the booth, came out and said he wanted some one to mark for him. "Step this way," shouted the moderator, "and take your solemn oath that you cannot read your ballot and must have help in marking it." "I won't swear to anything of the kind," said the man indignantly, and he went back to his booth. The crowd became impatient at the delay, and began to push hard for the narrow entrance. Strong men cried out in pain or anger; the stove tottered and part of the pipe fell, scattering soot on the nearest heads; the moderator thundered rebukes, and several men went home disgusted with the new-fangled system, only to be dragged back later by the committees of their respective parties.

Back of the town-house, Paugus River, well filled by the night's rain and the melted snow from the mountains, rushed noisily through its

rock-choked bed. I escaped from the hustling crowd in the hot hall, and watched the eager current till my eyes and ears were cleared of smoke and empty laughter, and a taste of something sweeter than politics was left on my tongue. The river, with its bright water, was following its course towards the Bearcamp and the sea, because for time out of mind it had flowed that way and knew no other. Most of the men inside the hall were acting their parts with much the same intelligence, and marking wherever they saw the letter R, or the letter D, not because they knew what those two great letters were struggling for this day in all the length and breadth of the Union, but because for years they had worshiped the one and hated the other with the fetich-maker's fervor.

A bright-faced, blue-eyed committee-man, just old enough to cast his first vote for his party's hero, came to call me to the dinner set for those who had come from a distance to vote. After dinner I took my share of the bone-crushing process inside the hall, marked my long ballot, and started at once for the city. First my friend's wagon rolled along the pleasant Bearcamp valley to the pine plains. Turning a little aside, we drove past White Pond, a shallow, mirror-like lake in the heart of the plain, framed in snowy sand and gaunt pines. The

view of the Sandwich range across this lake is exquisite at all times, but to-day, with the dark blue water dancing towards us in thousands of foam-capped waves, and the mountains standing out sharply against the pale blue sky, it was more than usually charming. Half a dozen wood-ducks were floating in the midst of the restless waves, not far from the shore. They paid no heed to our wagon as it crept through the sand on the beach.

When we reached the West Ossipee stage road I bade my friend good-by, and strolled towards the station alone. The south-bound train was not due till five, and it was now only half past two. The railway track was not more than half a mile distant across the pine plains, so, leaving the muddy road, I passed into the pines, following an obscure wood-path.

Presently the path became plainer, and as I glanced along its vista, my eye caught a flash of bright yellow gleaming from something at a distance. The object was shaped like a chimney, but it seemed to spring from the ground among the scrub-oaks. The path began to descend, at first gradually, then more abruptly, and I discovered that there was winding through the barrens ahead of me a small river, which a moment's consideration told me must be the Chocorua River, on its way to the Bearcamp.

Beyond the river was a small clearing and in it stood a red and white house with brilliant yellow chimneys. Then the land rose again abruptly, inclosing the little meadow and its cottage between high walls of sand, scrub, and pines.

Surprised to find an inhabited house in the heart of the plains, where I had supposed nothing but mayflowers and chewinks lived to break the monotony of scrub and pine, I pushed on to learn more of the place. When the path came to the river it crossed by a rustic bridge formed of a large bow-shaped tree with pieces of board nailed to it, and a strong hand-rail braced among its broken branches. The bridge was really artistic, as well as ingenious in construction. From its farther end I could see the whole of the tiny valley of which the mysterious house was the gay capital. Five or six acres of grass-land and pasture were surrounded by woods and sand hills. Three cows fed along the river bank. Near the house was a neatly fenced garden, and as I came to the fence I found it crossed by a real stile with three steps up and two steps down, and a rail to lean upon.

My approach had, ere this, attracted the attention of the inhabitants of the hidden valley, and five heads were visible at windows, house angle, and fence corners. I crossed the stile and gained the little piazza. The garrison

massed around its commander and mother, who was ironing a white apron on the kitchen table. Strong, plump, and smiling, she was proud of her little army, — a boy of fourteen, with soft black eyes, black hair, and the rich color of the Acadian peasant glowing on his cheeks; three tow-headed girls, with their mother's blue eyes, and a fifth, a girl of two summers, with beauty and dignity enough for a duke's darling. No overtures of mine were sufficient to conquer this haughty little being's reserve. She would have nothing of me, and finally intimated a desire that I should move on, and leave her undisturbed in her apple-eating. This I did, taking a farewell look at the cozy house from the crest of the sand-hills which rose between it and the railway. From the ridge I could see many a mile of forest, and many a mountain peak, none fairer than Chocorua. A grouse rose from the scrub at my feet, and flew nearly an eighth of a mile before alighting.

The little child's beauty haunted me as I strolled down the railway track, and I wondered what her future would be if she grew up in that snug nook in the woods and sand; what her character would be with its mingling of Celtic, Gallic, and Saxon elements; frozen in the northern winter and burned under the hot summer suns of the Ossipee plains.

At last the train came and bore me away

towards the city. The sun sank in orange splendor behind the Ossipees, and then the night overwhelmed color and form in its shadows, and left the mind freer in its musings. What had the day brought forth at the polls? Had the party of past glories and present decay won another of its wonderful series of victories, or had the people risen in their might and spoken for reform? I hoped for some gleam of news before the journey was over, but Portsmouth, Newburyport, Salem, and Lynn were all passed without tidings of what the day had done. Even in Boston, with its narrow streets filled with restless rivers of men and women, there seemed to be no word of victory or defeat.

At half past ten I reached a small room high in one of the great newspaper offices on Washington Street. Its windows looked out upon a strange sight. Far below me was a vast expanse of human heads upon which shone the bluish white glare of the hooded electric lamps. As white bubbles, densely spread upon the pale green of the ocean's water in some rock-rimmed grotto, surge now out, now in; to left, to right; advancing, retreating; crowding or separating; so those countless human heads swayed first one way, then another, moved by fickle eddies and forces hard to understand. Wild cries came from the crowd, cheers, jeers, and yells of pain or brutal merriment.

Inside the room the wearisome clicking of a telegraph operator's machine charmed a circle of eager men and women. As sheet after sheet was written by the operator, they passed from hand to hand. Some of those present read them nervously, others, really intensely concerned, seemed almost indifferent. Now and then hearty applause greeted a dispatch, or deep regret was expressed at some friend's defeat; but as a rule the fragmentary news was received silently. Midnight passed, and then, as the morning hours wore on, we knew that the people had achieved one of the most remarkable transfers of political power ever accomplished in the Union. Still, the result in Massachusetts was in doubt, and even those who watched until dawn finally sought sleep without knowing how the smaller cities had settled the great governorship contest.

Before sleep came to me, a panorama of the day swept in feverish review across my closed eyelids. I saw the surging mob in Washington Street, the group around the telegraph machine, the motley crowd in the Tamworth town-hall, the baby beauty of the Ossipee plains, and then, like a benediction, came a vision of Chocorua, snow-capped and immutable in a pale blue sky, with the rosy light of the clear November morning flooding its wondrous peak.

## A WINTRY WILDERNESS.

NORTH of the Sandwich Mountains, inclosed by a circle of sombre peaks, there once lay a beautiful lake. Centuries ago its outflowing stream, now called Swift River, cut so deeply between the spurs of Chocorua and Bear mountains that the greater part of the lake drained away into the Saco at Conway, leaving its level bed a fair and rich-soiled intervale.

By the road upon which the lake went out man in time came in, and founded in the bosom of the spruce-grown mountains a small but comparatively prosperous settlement. Having seen this hidden valley in summer, and taken account of its rare beauty and its remoteness from the wearisome machinery of the world, I yearned to know its winter charms, feeling sure that they would surpass those of summer as the fairness of snow surpasses the fairness of grass. Accordingly, in the latter part of December, 1891, I went by rail with a friend to Chataouque Corner, and thence by sleigh up the weird pass between Chocorua on the south and Moat and Bear mountains on the north, gaining at night-



fall a warm haven in one of the snug farmhouses in the middle of the intervale.

The township of Albany knows no priest or physician, squire or shopkeeper, and in its coat of arms, if it had one, the plow and rifle, axe and circular saw, would be quartered with bear and porcupine, owl and grouse. From the head of the intervale the people are forced to travel nearly thirty miles to reach and bring home their mail and groceries. In spite of these drawbacks, the permanent residents are intelligent, thrifty, well-housed, and well informed of the world's doings. Though their only road to the outside is long and rough, they let no moss gather on it in summer, and no snowdrifts blockade it in winter.

Setting out for this far valley in midwinter, I felt something of the explorer's thrill as he turns towards the unknown, and leaves home and comforts behind. The distant and the difficult of attainment are always seen by the mind through a golden haze, and although no fair Lorna drew me to her rescue, and no lawless Doones barred my way through the grim passes which led to the valley, romance and the spice of danger seemed mingled with my enterprise. As the journey progressed, and one stage of it after another slipped past, unreal gave way to real, and commonplace supplanted marvelous.

Even when night fell, as we entered the valley, the light which gleamed afar through the spruces told of hospitality as truly as the sleigh's ample furs spoke of comfort, and the keen wind of health.

We reached the valley on the evening of Saturday, December 19, and enjoyed every moment of our stay, which was prolonged until Saturday, the 26th. From my journal, written on the evening of each day, I take the following account of our wanderings.

We left Chatauque Corner (Conway) at three o'clock, well packed in the fur robes of a comfortable two-seated sleigh and drawn by a skinny graduate of a race-course. It was an ideal winter afternoon, blessing an ideal Northern landscape. There were the broad Saco intervalles flat with snow, the pale blue sky with a fringe of cloud-banks, and between intervalle and sky, mountains of marble and ramparts of dark evergreens. Straight up the Saco valley the immense mass of Mount Washington rose against the sky. It was wholly covered by snow. On its left, Moat, like a breaking wave of the sea, was close at hand. On its right, Carter Notch, with walls of dull purplish-black spruce, reached to where stately Mount Pequawket reared its dark cone on high. The Saco splashed in its rocky bed. Every boulder

was glazed with white ice, and from the two banks of the stream, borders of ice reached towards each other, half concealing the greenish waters which lapped their edges.

The sleighing was excellent. Not more than eight inches of snow had fallen during the week, and it was the first enduring fall of the season. It had been followed by a dash of rain and then a sudden freeze. After going a mile on the North Conway road, we turned to the left into a road leading westward towards the narrow pass between Chocorua and Moat. The immense crags of Moat frowned upon us. Then we plunged into a pine forest and felt the first chill of night. As we sped through the shadow, we passed the skinned carcass of an ox hung by its fore-legs to the limb of a pine. A strange slaughtering-place, and one to tempt sniffing foxes when night falls. A mile farther on, the skull of a bear grinned on the tip of a pole in the brush fence by the roadside.

Music sounded in our ears, and far below the narrow road, which was grooved in the mountain-side, we saw Swift River plunging from ledge to pool on its way to the Saco. The Saco had seemed wild when we saw it in Conway intervalle, but this stream's madness left it placid by comparison. Two steep slopes, glare with crusted snow, led down to the narrow channel.

At their foot boulders of every shape and size fought the progress of the water. The stream dashed itself against them, hurling spray into the air; the spray fell upon the snow and froze, fell upon the boulders and froze, or drained back into the stream, freezing in icicles of marvelous forms. The water, colored doubtless by the mosses and weeds below its surface, was green, — a cold, pale green, — with something of the cruelty of a winter ocean in its tones. Now and then we met and passed sleds heavily laden with lumber or logs. One load of birch logs was on fire at the hinder end, and the driver was warming his hands at the blaze. A few poor farms lined the road at points where small patches of tillable land were to be found between the rocky fingers of Moat. As we passed one of these farms a flock of two dozen or more snow-buntings rose from a field full of tall weed-stalks and whirled over us singing. Their sweet notes fell on us as holy water falls on a kneeling congregation.

The road grew steeper, and then it crossed the river, passing through a huge covered bridge, and soon we found ourselves inside of the portals of Chocorua and Moat, with the high ridge of Bear Mountain, covered with black spruces, barring our westward way. The wall of sullen forest seemed without a cleft, yet

the raging river which met us told of a way somewhere, to be found by retracing its channel.

In the midst of this gloomy hollow in the hills we found a slab village. A dozen or fifteen houses stood here, but no smoke curled from their chimneys. Last September every house was occupied; now the foxes roam through the deserted settlement unmolested. The saw-mill which had created the village had been burned and the whole population had vanished almost as swiftly as the smoke of the ruins. Not so the hideous scars left by the lumberman's axe. They will remain for many a day.

By a series of sharp ascents we gained and passed through the rift in the mountain wall made centuries ago by the imprisoned waters. In this rift at the eastern foot of Bear Mountain, only a few steps from the roadside, are the picturesque falls of Swift River. The treacherous ice and the gathering darkness forbade our going to the giddy margin of the fall, and we dashed on into the hidden valley, the narrow, mountain-girdled intervale of which we were in search. As we left the forest fringes of Bear Mountain behind us and emerged in the plain, a gorgeous winter sunset gave us welcome. Over the blue of the upper sky, in which Jupiter alone sparkled faintly, were scattered countless flakes of rosy cloud. Below

them a broad black band of cloud cut the sky at the level of several mountain peaks, and below this sinister bar, showing only in the gaps between the mountains, was a space of greenish silver, into which thousands of spruces reared their slender spires.

Taking fresh courage, our horse carried us over the fifteenth mile at racing speed. The road was level. On the right the flat, white intervale shone in the pale light as in distant ages the face of the great mountain lake shone in silent winter nights. Westward, across the end of the intervale, were Tripyramid, Kancamagus, and Osceola mountains; northward, Green's Cliffs, Carrigain, Lowell, Owl's Head, and Tremont Mountain stood shoulder to shoulder in double rank. Behind us, dark Bear Mountain concealed Moat, while spurs of Chocorua reached down to the road. On the left was Paugus, crouching at the foot of Passaconaway, which dominated over the valley with gloomy majesty. A bright light gleamed through the spruces, the Carrigain House lay there between black forest and pale snow, Mayhew's lantern swung to and fro, and his deep voice welcomed us to his cheerful home in the heart of the wintry wilderness.

Those who live in the city have an idea that it is hard to keep warm in these northern farm-

houses, with their single windows, thin walls, and wood fires. They are wrong. There is a degree of heat attainable in a small room, armed with an air-tight stove, which burns birch sticks or slabs almost as fast as they can be fed to it, that is able to hold its own against the equator at midsummer. It takes courage, on a cold morning before sunrise, to leave a warm bed to start a fire in one of these stoves; but when the fire is fully aroused, cold is put out of the question, or at least out of doors.

After a hot supper we put on our coats and furs and went out into the night. I had the same feeling of reverence and quiet that I have in going into a dimly-lighted cathedral. The stars flickered on high, the snow gleamed below, on every side mountain peaks guarded the narrow valley. In the spruce woods, which reach from the road back to Paugus, the darkness was intense. We listened. At first there seemed to be no sound to hear. Then the whisper of Swift River came out of the north, and the bark of a dog far up the valley told of a fox prowling too near the farmyard. Suddenly, from a bank of silver light back of Carrigain, two long tongues of pallid fire shot upward into the sky and trembled there, only to disappear as abruptly as they came. Although the dim auroral glow stayed in the north for some time, I saw no more radiating light.



It was but little after eight o'clock when we sought sleep and found it quickly between feathers below and mighty piles of blankets and comforters above.

Untroubled moonlight flooded Swift River intervale all night, and there was still more of moonlight than of daylight when our host came into our room in the morning to light our fire. The winter working - costume of our host deserves mention. His brown cardigan jacket was not remarkable, but his legs were marvelously encased. They began at the body with ample woolen trousers, half way between the hip and knee gave way to tightly-fitting scarlet wrappings which reached to low rubbers, covering the feet. Nimble of foot, and of wiry frame, the wearer of these remarkably unpuritanical nether garments was a most enlivening figure in the snow.

Encouraged by our fire, we arose with the sun. The mountains in the north were bathed in rosy light. Dark as were their forests, each of these mountains presented snow-covered ledges, or avalanche scars white with snow. Upon these white surfaces the sunlight fell with that soft blush which makes a winter sunrise so charmingly full of promise. We hastened out of doors as soon as dressed, and were at once greeted by joyous voices. A red squirrel in



the dark spruces was whirling his watchman's rattle; far away in the forest a woodpecker was drumming on a resonant tree-trunk; but near at hand, only across one snow-covered field, a chorus of bird voices quivered in the still, cold air. The air was cold, that was true. Zero was the point the mercury held to, and as we took long breaths of the pure air we spouted forth columns of white steam through our ice-hung beards. Trotting up the road, we sought the birds. We found them at the next farmhouse, perched by dozens on plum-trees, maple saplings by the road, and on the tips of a row of spruces opposite the farmyard. Some were in the road, others in the dooryard on the soiled snow where oxen had stood. In all, over a hundred were present. As we drew near, they rose and flew in waving circles over us, every bird singing until the whole air seemed tingling with sound. Then they came down in undulating lines, curves, angles, and plunges, which turned aside into a second flight in the sunlight. As they settled in groups in the various trees, I swept my glass over one cluster after another. Crossbills were the most numerous species, with goldfinches a close second, and pine finches third. The crossbills were in all stages and conditions of plumage, from rich red males blazing like dull coals plucked from the fire, to

dingy brown. No white-winged crossbills seemed to be among them. Three months before, on a cold dewy morning in September, I stood on this spot and saw a flock of thirty crossbills in these same trees. Then a number of them were feeding in the edge of the pasture at a place where cattle had been salted in a shallow trough. I saw the birds tearing off fibres from the wood of the trough, so eager were they to get the salt which the wood had absorbed. This morning the salt trough was covered with snow, save one edge which protruded; but all around it the crossbills had trodden the snow into a path, showing that they were still salt-hungry. Acting upon this hint, I sprinkled the ground with grain and rock salt; but although birds were in all the trees, they paid no heed to my offerings.

After watching the crossbills for nearly an hour we walked westward. The birds had been more restless than we. Few of them remained still more than two or three minutes at a time. With sharp calls the crossbills would dash off, followed by the finches, and together, or in scattered detachments, they would wheel from one quarter of the heavens to another, perhaps returning in a moment to the same perch, perhaps vanishing in distance, not to reappear for many minutes. All the time that they were on the wing the air was full of their fragments of music.

Our way led for a mile through the level fields of the intervale. Five or six farmhouses or wood-cutters' huts faced the straight road. At almost every house a few birds were seen, probably parts of the main flock. We also caught a glimpse of a large flock of snow-buntings flying helter-skelter over a field where yellow grasses were waving above the snow. At length our road came to an end at the banks of Swift River near the upper end of the intervale. The river was shallow, and so was a broad brook flowing into it at this point. The latter we found no great difficulty in crossing dry-shod, by going from one pile of stones and ice to another. Beyond the stream we entered a bit of primeval forest, only partly destroyed by lumbermen of an earlier generation, who seem to have been less grasping than their successors. In these woods we heard bird voices, and recognized the "*quank, quank*" of the red-bellied nuthatch, and the "*chick-a-dee-dee-dee*" of the titmouse. To call them nearer I hooted like an owl, and soon after, sharp alarm whistles almost exactly like those of a robin came from some unknown birds in a bunch of firs at a distance. Upon hooting again, I was pleasantly surprised to get a reply from a barred owl. A moment or so later we heard blue jays scolding him not far away.

After strolling through these woods and along the edge of Sabba Day Brook for an hour we turned towards home, treading in our previous footprints and thus avoiding crashing through the brittle crust of the snow. On reaching the spot where the owl had hooted, I used my metallic bird whistles and drew a crowd of chickadees, kinglets, nuthatches, and blue jays. Then I hooted, the jays scolded noisily, and soon the owl replied. He came nearer by degrees, I hooting occasionally, he frequently. Finally he alighted in a tree just over us, but saw us at once and flew away. I continued hooting and he replied again, and came back within sight. Whenever he moved, the jays pursued him scolding, and they were still watching him when we resumed our march towards home.

## CLIMBING BEAR MOUNTAIN IN THE SNOW.

*Monday, December 21.* The moon ate up the clouds during the night, and at dawn the only remnants of what the evening before had looked like a storm were the cloud-caps upon Tripyramid and Kancamagus, and a band of mist across Church's Pond at the western end of the intervale. We were dressing about seven o'clock when our host came to our door, saying, "If you want to see a fox, come quickly." I ran into the east room and caught a last glimpse of Reynard trotting briskly over the snow towards the rising sun. He seemed to be following a scent which went in a somewhat wavy line across the field. At eight o'clock, just as we were striding up the road to pay a visit to the crossbills, a wild cry rang from the forest and echoed from end to end of the valley. It was the voice of the timber-eater, coming northward by his tortuous path from Upper Bartlett, and calling for his day's food. The men at the lumber cars near our house bustled a little, and then started down the track

to see the engine come in. On its arrival one heavily laden car was attached to it, and the train, thus made up, at once started back. Meanwhile, we had met two tree sparrows by the roadside and seen our crossbills and goldfinches on their favorite trees. They had, apparently, eaten none of the cracked corn sprinkled for them upon the snow. As the train was about to start, we boarded the engine and gained a promise from the engineer to let us out at the foot of Bear Mountain. Crossing Swift River, the train entered the spruce forest and began its winding journey towards Upper Bartlett. With my head out of the left-hand window, I absorbed all the novelty and beauty of the scene. Inside, the engineer sat at his window with his earnest eyes looking up the track, his strong hand upon crank or lever, and his face grave and quiet. The fireman poured oil into the sucking cups above the boiler; then he clanked the chain of the furnace door, peeped into the raging fire within, hurled into it a shovelful of coal dust, rammed it home with the poker, worked the movable lever which dumped ashes, and again poured oil into the sucking, choking cups.

Outside, the spruce forest hemmed us in, but rising above it headland after headland of black rocks, snow-incrusted ledges, and lofty spruces

came into view, frowned upon us, and were left behind. A flock of blue jays crossed in front of the engine, a red squirrel whisked along a log by the track. Now the rails sloped up so that the engineer increased his power, then the track fell away so that all power was cut off. Trestle after trestle was crossed, strange piles of bark-covered logs which groaned under our weight as we rolled over them.

After traveling four miles to get ahead less than two, the engineer stopped for us to begin our climb up Bear Mountain. He leaned out of his window, giving us advice and wishing us a fair trip. Then he applied the power, and the great mass moved on through the notch towards Upper Bartlett. This short piece of rough road is operated solely to carry out lumber and logs; but if people wish to ride, they are taken without charge. It is said that if the road refused to take them they could compel it to run passenger trains.

The point at which the kindly engineer had stopped to leave us was the lower end of a series of lumber roads leading to the upper slopes of Bear Mountain. The mountain, once covered with an immense spruce forest, has now been stripped of the greater part of its valuable timber. Beginning at the main road in which we stood, dozens of minor roads held the mountain

in their embrace. They reminded me of the tentacles of an enormous devil-fish. Near the focus of all these roads we found a log cabin and stables. The cabin was one of the best I have ever seen. It was about sixty feet long, and contained a room at each end and roofed space in the middle open at front and back. Near the house we heard bird voices, and I at once used my Spanish whistles. The effect was excellent. Four or five red-bellied nuthatches, one white-bellied, and a small flock of pine finches responded. The siskins were very noisy and quite restless. They were feeding on the seeds and buds of a tall birch. Leaving the hut at nine o'clock, we strolled up the snow-covered roads. The voices of birds were ever in our ears. Squirrel and rabbit tracks, with now and then the tracks of a fox, followed or cut the roads. The snow was five or six inches in depth and covered by a thin and brittle crust. In many places numbers of well-filled beechnuts were strewn upon the ground. This is beech-nut year, and the squirrels have more than they can pick up. The snow in the road was easy to walk upon, the air was mild, the sun warm, the spruces rich with olive light and brilliantly contrasted with the deep blue sky against which our mountain towered. On each side of the narrow way "top wood" and branches were



piled in ramparts. The many roads reaching up the mountain are in places set so closely together that their ramparts of top wood touch each other, forming almost impassable barriers.

It was in one of these tangles that I discovered two small woodpeckers at work tapping upon the trunks of two unhealthy spruces spared by the axe. I saw at a glance that the birds were unfamiliar in coloring, and I crawled in among the top wood to examine them more closely. To whistles, hooting, and squeaks they paid no attention, but kept on hammering the trees until small flakes of loose bark flew at every blow. My crashing through snow and branches startled one bird, but the other stood his ground until I got within about fifteen feet of him. My glass brought out every detail of his plumage. Upon his head was a yellow cap, his throat was snowy white, his sides were finely, delicately barred with black and white, his back was largely black, but down his spine ran a belt of black and white cross-lining. Instead of having four toes like the downy and other common woodpeckers, this stranger from the north had but three toes. He was the ladder-backed woodpecker of the great northern forests. During the twenty minutes that I watched him he made no vocal sound, but worked incessantly, tearing away bark, and

drilling into the trunk of the spruce. When he had inspected the tree to its highest part he flew several rods to rejoin his mate.

At last the roads ended and we entered the remnant of dark forest which crowns the mountain. There was a chill in the gloomy shades. The snow was softer and deeper here. It covered innumerable boulders closely wedged together between the stems of the spruces. On the sides of these rocks we could see delicate mosses imprisoned in the ice and snow. At frequent intervals we encountered masses of fallen timber wrecked by hurricanes. Another obstacle to our ascent was the dense growth of young spruces which in places made walking almost impossible. In the edge of an open space in this forest we called together the birds by means of my whistle. A flock of juncos appeared in a pile of top wood; red-bellied nut-hatches came and clung head downwards on the nearest trunks and *quanked* at us, kinglets bustled in, peeped at us, and bustled out, a dozen or more red crossbills alighted close above us and to our satisfaction made the note which had so puzzled us yesterday and which sounds like the robin's alarm-note. Best of all, a flock of sixty pine siskins came into the nearest trees, and one or two of them came down to the level of our heads and questioned us plaintively.

The body of sweet sound made in a conversational way by these gentle, cheerful little birds, was amazing.

We reached the summit at about noon, and were fully repaid for the three hours' climb. During the ascent, charming views of Passaconaway, Tripyramid, Kancamagus, and the dazzlingly white fields of the intervale had greeted us whenever we stopped to rest. Now were added Chocorua, Moat, Pequawket, Mount Washington and his supporting mountains, the Franconia group, Carrigain, and the Bartlett valley. Moat and Chocorua are much alike from this point of view. They are both comparatively treeless mountains and were consequently snowy white. Their outlines suggest combing breakers. Chocorua, being under the low-hanging sun, was reflecting light from every crusted snowbank and ice-wrapped boulder. It was like a mountain of cut glass. Mount Washington was unobscured, and in the noonday sun as colorless as summer clouds. This snowy whiteness of its upper mass wound in streams down its sides, as soft frosting pours in grooves down the sides of a birthday cake. Between these streams of whiteness ran upward long fingers of dark forest. Most of the other mountains in sight were wooded to their summits, and so contrasted sharply in their sombre colorings with their snowy rivals.

The narrow ridge which forms the top of Bear Mountain is blockaded by fallen timber. Squirring through the tangle, we saw all the views and then sat down in the sun on piles of spruce branches and ate our lunch. Having no water, we quenched our thirst by mingling snow with our bread and eating them together. As we ate and rested, looking across a wooded valley toward Carrigain and the Franconias, a flock of white-winged crossbills alighted above our heads and talked to us. Several were rosy males in the perfection of plumage. Many more siskins came and went, and so did a flock of four red nuthatches and several kinglets.

Our descent was rapid and amusing. We plunged downward from tree to tree with long strides and slides, sometimes falling, often coasting faster and farther than we wished. Three more flocks of crossbills, many dozens of siskins, and a scattering of nuthatches gladdened us as we pushed down the slopes. A hawk, too, came quite near to us, soaring at last so as to clear the mountain's crest. He was rather small, and very quick and jerky in his wing motions. He circled from left to right in small curves.

While walking home on the railway we were fortunate enough to call to us a small flock of pine grosbeaks, five or six only, and having no

red birds in their number so far as I could see. Red squirrels were ubiquitous. I think we saw, or heard the chattering of, at least twenty during the day. I have been told so often that chipmunks keep closely housed in winter that when one squealed at me from his hole near the track I did not trust either my own ears or those of my friend. Seeing is believing, however, and a dozen or two rods farther on another chipmunk stayed on his log long enough for us to count his stripes and wish him a merry Christmas.

We reached home at about half past four, just as the western sky was filled with rosy light by a sun already set. Venus, close to the dark rim of Passaconaway, and Jupiter, in the higher sky, summoned the stars to their posts, and encouraged us to beg for supper.

## IN THE PAUGUS WOODS.

JUST opposite our house, which stood on the north side of the road, facing south towards Paugus, was a black forest of spruces. Into this we plunged on Tuesday morning, not knowing what might lie within. The silence of the gloom was broken by the sound of falling bits of ice and drops of melting snow. Bird notes, too, could be heard, and now and then a red squirrel chattered. The trunks of the trees stood closely together, and thousands of small dead branches radiated from the trunks and interlaced, opposing our progress. The crashing of these twigs as we broke through them, accompanied by the crunching of the snow-crust under our feet, noisily announced our coming. At intervals we found masses of fallen timber, the wreck of fierce storms, and brooks covered with thin ice and misleading snow, through which we slumped into cold water beneath. Every few paces rabbit tracks dotted the soft film of snow which lay upon the crust. If the tracks which we crossed during our three or four mile walk could have been measured in

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all their meanderings, I think the aggregate of miles traversed by the rabbits of that locality would have been found to rival the railway mileage of New Hampshire. From time to time we stopped to call birds to us by the aid of my whistles. I think I called eight or nine times, and in each instance birds appeared promptly. Usually pine finches came first, whirling through the upper air like burnt paper driven by the wind. As they passed over us, they would catch the sound of the whistles more distinctly and begin a series of undulatory circles. Then one or two would drop straight down into a leafless tree, or upon the tips of the spruces, and the rest would follow them, sometimes twenty going into one tree. Their sweet queryings filled the air, and drew other birds to the focus of sound, among others a number of purple finches and a white-bellied nuthatch. Kinglets came very near to us when we were well hidden; so near that the brilliant color on their dainty heads could be seen with perfect distinctness. There were more chickadees in these woods than in the other places we had visited, and I examined them all with great care, hoping to find a Hudson Bay titmouse. Two flocks of the common species came, and produced no northern birds, but at a third rally of nuthatches, finches, and kinglets, a strange

voice made itself heard. I knew it for something different from a chickadee at once, and yet it was titmouse language. Squeaking vigorously, I called the stranger down to me. At first I thought it was a chickadee; then he sputtered out his "*dee-dee*" and showed his brownish head and great chestnut patch on his flank, and I knew he was from Hudson Bay. Three others joined him and gave me ample chance to inspect their points. I had the feeling that they had less character and spirit than our blackcap titmouse. Their voices were weaker and more petulant and their general appearance less positive and aggressive.

Once I caught a glimpse of a big white hare bounding away from us through a jungle of young spruces. He was so nearly the color of the snow that my eyes found it difficult to follow him.

After going rather more than two miles through the spruce tangle, we entered an old logging road much used by rabbits, foxes, and grouse, and, following it northward, we made our way home.

About 3.30 P. M. the baying of a hound attracted our notice, and I walked up the road to see what he was doing. He soon appeared at the edge of the spruce woods, and I followed him into their dark shades. After a moment's



hesitation he took the back track and was soon almost out of earshot on a hot scent. Not long after, my friend left the house and, crossing Swift River by the railway bridge, followed the rails northward through the forest. Soon he heard the hound baying to the eastward, down river. Then a snapping of branches and crunching of crust came to his ears, and a moment later a deer broke through the bushes, dashed up the embankment, and, turning at right angles, came in weary leaps towards him. My friend stood perfectly still, too much astonished to move. The deer came to within twelve paces of him, then saw him, and with a bound left the track and plunged into the woods on the western side. A few moments later the hunters came up and my friend demanded what they were doing, and whether the hound was their dog, in so severe a tone that the poachers denied their interest in the dog and made off into the woods. Meanwhile, I wandered southward through the spruces, now hearing the hound, now losing his melancholy baying. No small birds were to be seen or heard. They had vanished to their night abiding-places. Two grouse rose noisily and went into the tops of the trees. Red squirrels continued to bustle about until after dusk. As light faded in the sky, the forest grew very dark, and fallen trees, stumps,

and bushes rearranged themselves into weird shapes which seemed to move against the vague background of the snow. The silence of the cold black and white woods became oppressive, and the chill of night increased moment by moment. The baying of the hound, lost to the eastward, had come again from the north, and finally moved over towards the west. It was after five o'clock, and the dog had followed his chase since eleven. Standing still, listening to the hound, and peering into the trees in search of the grouse, I began to grow drowsy, and to long to sink down upon the soft snow and go to sleep. It required a strong effort of will to rouse myself and to start my benumbed feet upon their homeward way. As soon as I moved, the grouse, which had been budding in a high maple, flew away deeper into the gloom, and then utter silence settled down upon the deserted forest.

When we awoke, December 24, the day promised to be fine. Blue sky covered the area above Carrigain, and a cool west wind swept across the fields from which much of the snow had disappeared. We had planned to climb another of the mountains near the railway track, but while we were breakfasting, the engine came in, and, finding no cars loaded, went out again at once. By nine o'clock clouds had gathered and

caps had settled down upon many of the peaks. We heard crossbills calling as we left the house. Their short, sharp call is much like the English sparrow's alarm-note. A flock of nine settled on the spruces by the salting-trough as we went past. One was a red bird, two had a trace of red, five were brown, with some streaking on the sides of the breast, and one was quite yellow. One of them was gnawing a long shoot of spruce which had already been chewed free of needles and left brown and forlorn. Unfortunately we took a dog with us, a black mongrel with pleading eyes and no wisdom. He loved to zigzag over the country in front of us, and to bark at red squirrels. He was a nuisance, but very sweet-tempered, as many fools are. We took him, hoping that he might hunt rabbits, but we wished him in Jericho long before the forenoon was over.

Although cloudy all day, no rain fell until evening; consequently birds were astir and abundant. We left the highway at a point where an old logging road led southward through the spruce swamp, parallel to a stream bearing the odd name of Oliverian Brook. Continued far enough over ledges and through "harricanes," the road would pass between Paugus and Passaconaway and come out into the Birch Intervale, Tamworth. After going in for a couple of

miles the road bends to the left, following the east branch of the Oliverian Brook up to the spruce forests on Paugus.

We made our first halt in a dense spruce and hemlock thicket and called for birds. They came from all quarters until dozens of the usual kinds were around us. After a while seven or eight blue jays flitted past, one by one, attracted mainly by my hooting. They came within easy gunshot and peered at us with suspicion and anger in their wicked eyes. They are villains in spite of their attractive dress. Suddenly they flew with cries of alarm, and I saw a large light-colored hawk sweep past and alight in a tall dead tree just out of range. The dog at this crisis made his appearance and rushed back and forth with ill-timed energy. The hawk flew a little farther away and was on his guard against stalking. The jays also vanished, and soon the smaller birds left also. Among the latter was one Hudson Bay titmouse.

In the depths of the spruce swamp the snow had not wasted much, and it was soft enough to take the imprint of passing feet. We found the tracks of a deer, a mink, and a 'coon. Foxes, rabbits, squirrels, mice, and grouse had been that way also. Several times, in crossing fresh fox tracks, I got a whiff of odor which I

fancied might be that of the fox. It suggested the smell of hamamelis. The swamp trees were draped with gray moss, one of the most striking of nature's decorations in this latitude. Many of the trees were thickly grown with green lichens, which, being wet, were two or three times as bright in coloring as when dry. In spots where the snow had melted, showing patches of the swamp floor, mayflower, checker-berry, ranunculus, partridge-berry, ferns, and other leaves showed their vivid coloring, or were replaced in very damp ground by sphagnum.

As we neared the slopes of Paugus the trees became larger and the forest clear of undergrowth. Our road — a very old one — was most clearly marked by being densely grown with weeds, and an inferior crop of trees and bushes. As compared with the clear forest, the road was a ribbon-like jungle. Its young growth was composed of viburnums, slender maples, and cherry-trees. Spots where the cattle had been fed could be picked out by means of the asters, clover, and other flowers and weeds which had sprung up from the seeds sown by the fodder.

In the edge of the high growth we halted a second time, and called the birds together. They failed not to respond, and when their

chattering was at its height the familiar "*who-hoo, hoo-hoo, who-hoo-hoo-hooo*" of a barred owl was heard. The birds became silent and most of them disappeared, perhaps to scold the real owl. Many of the trees in this belt of forest were nearly a hundred feet in height.

Well up towards the high ridges of Paugus our road crossed the Oliverian Brook. The point chosen twenty years ago by the lumberman-engineer for building his bridge was a ravine of singularly picturesque character. Thirty feet below its two precipitous banks the noisy torrent struggled among its boulders. Dozens of dark spruces overhung it, and rank upon rank of evergreens lined the banks. In the bed of the brook the lumbermen had built up in "cob-house" fashion two log abutments about twenty-five feet high. From each bank immense logs were run out to rest upon the abutments, and similar logs formed the central span. Then scores of shorter logs were laid across from girder to girder, and all were firmly bound together by heavy side-logs laid on top of and parallel to the girders. We decided to cross this bridge, although it was falling to pieces. Many of the short logs had rotted off and fallen through. We walked upon the girders, the whole bridge trembling ominously under our tread. Our dog, foolish as he was,

knew enough not to cross this bridge, for after inspecting it he whined, ran down the bank, plunged through the stream, and clambered up the other side.

At half past two we had reached rather high land. The road was fast climbing the flank of Paugus, following a minor branch of the Oliverian Brook. Just across this little run rose the gloomiest grove of spruces we had seen. It stood upon a bank fifty feet above the road and brook. I clambered up to it, and forced my way through its dense tangle. To my surprise I found that it was only about thirty feet wide, growing on a mere tongue of land between two mountain gorges. On the farther side the land fell off abruptly two or three hundred feet, and down in the shades below still another branch of the Oliverian fretted in its bed. Beyond it was another ridge, over which, a mile and more away, grim Passaconaway frowned across at me. A white cloud-banner streamed from his spruce-crowned head. To the serious detriment of my clothes I climbed a tall spruce on the edge of the ravine in order to determine our position. Behind us was Paugus, its summits within comparatively easy reach. From them I could have looked down at my snow-covered home by Chocorua lakes. Westward, just across the forest basin on whose edge we stood,



was Passaconaway. Northward the eye wandered downward over gently sloping tree-tops to the broad snowy intervale with its cozy farms and its one long, straight road, running from west to east, from the forests by Sabba Day Brook, down Swift River, through its gorges towards Conway. Above and beyond the intervale were the northern mountains which lock it in from the rest of the world, — Bear Mountain on the right, then Owl's Head, Carrigain, Green's Cliffs, Sugar Hill, and Kancamagus. The notch east of Carrigain is one of the grandest rifts in the White Mountain panorama. It is like a black gateway opened for storms and wailing winds to sweep through.

The black grove on its narrow tongue of land hanging between two gorges was alive with birds, and I fancied it to be their sleeping-place. Chickadees, kinglets, and a brown creeper were in possession and resented my intrusion. It was just such a place as I have always imagined a small bird's dormitory to be.

We returned, descending by another logging road leading due north to the intervale road about a mile below the Carrigain House. This logging road is one of the most picturesque I have ever seen. It follows closely a brook of considerable size which is one long series of pools, falls, and dashing rapids. The forest on



both sides of the brook bed is of high growth and generous proportions. Every few moments a vista view of Bear Mountain charmed us as we wound down the steep incline, while behind and above us the ledges of Paugus, gleaming with ice and capped by snow, showed at intervals through the trees.

## AT THE FOOT OF PASSACONAWAY.

WEDNESDAY, December 23, dawned under a damp sky. Tripyramid kept on his nightcap, and patches of mist clung to the dark precipice of Passaconaway. The mountains looked higher and more threatening than on previous days, and they seemed closer to us than when the sun shone. A whisper of falling drops and settling snow ruffled the morning calm. Nevertheless, patches of blue sky showed in the west, and once or twice a silvery spot in the clouds suggested the sun's burning through. We went first to see our favorite flock of birds at the cattle-trough in the pasture. They were there in full force, nearly if not quite a hundred strong. They allowed me to come within about twenty feet of them, and to watch them narrowly through my glass. Rather more than half were red crossbills. Of the remainder, two thirds were pine finches, and one third goldfinches. No red-polls were to be seen. The coloring in the crossbills was amazingly diverse. There were very brilliant males with cinnabar tints wherever such color is ever found. From

this maximum of intensity their coloring graded downward through partial red markings on the one hand, and through gradually fading red markings on the other. I saw one bird with red on his rump only. The fading from red to yellow yielded many gradations of red and yellow or orange down to pure gold. The brown birds were the more numerous, and they seemed to have various combinations of light and dark, with now and then suggestions of bright tints. In some individuals the mandibles crossed in one way, and in others the opposite way. In size the crossbills varied widely. Often, in glancing quickly at a group, I mistook the smaller, duller birds for pine finches. A dozen times in as many minutes the flock whirled upwards and round and round, showering the air with their delicious medley music. Generally from three to six old birds remained in one of the two spruces near the fence by the trough, and a sharp call from them brought the flock down again like a fall of hail.

When we had walked a mile up the valley a shower struck us, and we waited a few moments under the shelter of an old house from which the wall boards had been removed. We heard sweet bird notes, but could not locate the singers. When we turned to go, however, a flock of sixteen snow-buntings rose from a field where

they had been feeding in the yellow grasses, and vibrated away with merry calls until swallowed up in fog and rain.

The wasting of the snow under the hot sun of Monday and the cloudy sky but mild air of Tuesday had left many plants and dried flower-stalks exposed to view. Plum-colored masses of berry bushes encroached upon the wide expanse of snow as headlands reach out into a calm sea. Tiny forests of wiry grass reared their heads above the snow. In color they were what is called "sandy." Goldenrod and aster stems, holding aloft dry and brittle suggestions of long-lost flowers; the heads of brunella, looking like chess castles, and of the Indian pipe, upright and pineapple-shaped; and many delicate hairlike stems from which all trace of leaf and flower had departed, broke the evenness of the snow fields, and were beautiful in an unassuming, unconscious, unintentional way. Indeed, many of them had never shone with beauty before. In summer, submerged in the wilderness of green things which crowd the unplowed intervale, they could not have been found by the eye of any one in chance passing. But in winter, the time of their nominal beauty gone, they lingered in their old age, and looked more beautiful in their bleached simplicity than those summer flowers which never gave them a chance to reveal what was in them.

At the end of the intervale, instead of plunging into the woods where our barred owl lived, we turned southward towards the foot of Passaconaway. The rough road led through the forest to a saw-mill under the shoulder of the first ridge of the mountains. Downes Brook had been partially dammed to form a pond, upon which hundreds of logs lay awaiting their fate. At the foot of the dam stood the mill. Its lower story was an engine-room. A steam-engine of considerable power worked four saws, a planer, and an endless chain used to draw in logs from the ice. At the dam end these logs were being drawn in upon the floor, measured, and marked. Then they went to the first and largest saw, which cut off their slabs, reduced them to boards or planks, and sent them along to the second saw to have their ends squared. From the second saw they went to the third, where their sides were made equal, and hence through the planer, out at the lower end of the mill, down a chute to a platform where they were piled, ready to be hauled away. The fourth saw was used to cut the slabs and edge-cuttings into the right lengths for fuel; for not only the engine demon in the under story fed on wood, but all the people in the intervale burned slabs. About twelve men were employed in the upper part of the mill, some

Americans, some French Canadians, and some Irishmen. One young Frenchman was a picture of dirty beauty and health. His jet-black hair, reeking with oil, was plastered in a curve over his forehead. His mustache was curling, and his snapping eyes, dark skin, rosy cheeks, and powerful but rather gross body made a striking picture for a day laborer.

Leaving the mill with its distracting noise, we ascended the main logging road towards Passaconaway. It follows Downes Brook southward, now clinging to one hillside, then crossing the ice-bound torrent by a rude but massive bridge of spruce logs to stay for a while on the opposite bank. On each side the timber had been cut and hauled away. The survival of the unfittest is the rule in the forest after the lumber thief has been through it. He leaves the crooked, the feeble, and the diseased trees, and packs around their roots the fertilizing branches and tops of the logs which he hauls away. On our way up we met several teams coming down the slippery, sloppy road. Two strong Canadian horses, low sleds, three great logs chained together and to the sleds, and an oily, tobacco-chewing French Canadian made up a team. We stopped and talked to one driver, who said that if the snow went off they would keep on with their hauling, using the runners on the

bare ground. While he chatted with us he fed his nigh horse on pieces of chewing tobacco, which the horse took from his fingers or bit from the plug. We were told later that this is a common form of attention for the drivers to show their favorite horses. The horse swallowed the tobacco. About half a mile above the mill we came to the logging camp. There was a compact log stable, a log smithy manned by a sturdy Frenchman in moccasins who spoke very little English, and a living-house made of slabs covered with tarred paper well battened down. The house stood on a ribbon of ground between the road and the steep edge of the torrent. Entering through a low shed at the southern or upper end of the shanty, we found ourselves in the kitchen and dining-room. The room contained two cook-stoves and three long, narrow board tables with benches facing them. The tables were set for thirty-five men, allowing about twenty inches of space for each man. We were welcomed by the cook, a New Englander, who boasted of having cooked in lumber camps for twenty years. He prided himself on his bread, and cut a loaf to show its quality. I never ate better bread anywhere. The dishes on the table were simple, — tin plates, tin cups, bottles of vinegar, pitchers of maple syrup, tins holding mountains of yellow butter, and plates

piled high with "fried holes," as doughnuts are graphically termed. Baked beans are a staple dish, but I noticed a barrel of pork at the door, and lying on the woodpile a big bundle of cod-fish and a side of beef certified as good by the Hon. Jere. Rusk.

The sleeping-room of the camp was not attractive. It was dark, hot, stuffy in odor, and overcrowded. Rude bunks, three tiers deep, lined the side walls. The men turn into these pens with their clothes on, often wet with rain or snow. Teamsters are roused at four A. M.; the rest of a "crew" somewhat later. In winter, four A. M. and midnight are equally gloomy, and if either is colder it is the morning hour. The cook said he could remember but one case of serious illness in his logging camps. The grip, he said, seldom kept a man from work more than one or two days. He expressed great fondness for birds, and spoke of the daily visits of crossbills, and in some years of moose-birds. "They know their friends, as most dumb beasts do," he declared, and went on to tell of a terrible storm of snow and sleet which came one winter, threatening death to his pets. "I just opened my camp doors and called and whistled to my birds, and in they came, dozens of 'em, until every beam and perch in the camp was full of 'em."



We strolled up the road for a mile or more beyond the camp. At several points deposits of logs had been made at the sides of the road. Several hundred logs lay in each pile. Near by, hemlock bark was stacked in long rows, flanking the road. We crossed the torrent twice on spruce bridges, and each time gained a magnificent view of Passaconaway. It was framed in black clouds, rushing masses of vapor, and dark hillsides still laden with forests. In the foreground was the foaming stream, boulder-choked, bounding towards us. From this side Passaconaway shows no peak; it is simply a somewhat worn cube, to whose precipitous faces the forests cling and the snows freeze. Its coloring is dark in any light, but as we saw it through the gathering storm of that late December day a more forbidding mountain mass could hardly be imagined. It was so near us, yet so high above us; so black, so cold, so lonely, yet so full of nature's voices, the wailing of wind, the cruel rush of waters, the weird creaking of strained trees. The stream, with its greenish waters hurling themselves over the boulders and fretting against the ice sheets projecting from the banks, seemed like a messenger rushing headlong from the mountain to warn us back from impending danger.

Resting for a while under the shelter of a

giant hemlock, we called the birds. Two or three chickadees and two kinglets came to us, but they were subdued by the storm and shy about getting wet. Then we walked briskly homeward, the rain falling in earnest during the latter part of the way. A snowy fog rose from all parts of the valley, spreading most rapidly from the western end. The flat fields of snow vanished first; then the damp veil crept up the dark spruces and hid their tops; and finally mountain peak after mountain peak surrendered to the rising tide, and we were left alone in the dense fog with only a narrow circle of steaming snow around us. As the day wore on, rain fell faster and harder, the wind rose, it grew colder, and the blackness of the winter night would have been terrible but for the peace and comfort within doors. On such a night the deer in their "yards" must shiver with the chilling dampness; the grouse must find the snow too wet to sleep in; and foxes and rabbits, if they leave their dens and forms at all, must regret the hunger which drives them out. Where are the crossbills and siskins? I wish that I knew and could find them out, and take a friendly look at their ruffled feathers, their heads tucked under their wings, and perhaps dozens of their plump little bodies snuggled together in a dark, dry spruce.

## CHRISTMAS AT SABBA DAY FALLS.

CHRISTMAS DAY was warm, cloudy at best, densely foggy at worst. Soon after breakfast we were swinging westward up the valley road, determined to find Sabba Day Falls or perish in the attempt. As we passed the crossbill feeding-ground no birds were in sight, but a moment later, high in the air, we heard bird voices. Looking skyward, we saw a flock of from one to two hundred birds whirling round and round, like ashes drawn upwards over a fire. They were at a very great height, and were gradually rising. As they increased their distance they disappeared and reappeared several times; then they vanished wholly, swallowed up in the high air. I think they were our crossbills, goldfinches, and siskins, and that they were soaring in search of fair weather, perhaps intending to migrate to some other favorite haunt. Christmas Day is not a time when one expects much color in a White Mountain landscape, but the warm air, the moisture, and the contrasts against snow below and fog above combined to produce and to make evident

a great deal of exquisite tinting in the shrubs of the fields and the forests of the mountain spurs. As we strode up the line of yellow mud which made the road, our path was bordered by shallow snow from which sprung an abundant growth of hardhack and spiræa. Taken in masses, their stems made a rich maroon, somewhat dull near by, but warm and deep when seen across an acre of snow. A foot or two higher than these small shrubs were viburnums and small cherry and maple trees growing along the skirts of the forest. Their general tone was also dull red, though somewhat brighter than the spiræa. The next band of color was ashy mottled with dark green, and made probably by young birches, poplars, beeches, and hemlocks. Then came a belt of fog mingled with snowy smoke from the saw-mill, and above that a broad band of ashes-of-rose color, formed by the upper branches and twigs of the common deciduous trees. Above all were the spruces, always dark except when the piercing eye of the sun reveals the wonderful golden olive which they keep for him alone.

The smoke of the saw-mill showed that the timber-eater finds no time for remembering the birthday of Jesus. Teams were moving as usual, carrying the green lumber down to the railway. The men employed to demolish our

forests are poorly paid. A dollar a day and board is what the French Canadian receives here. Board is called fifty cents a day, and the married workman with a houseful of children lives on that sum. We passed the home of a French Canadian known in the valley as Bumblebee. The house is twelve feet long by ten feet deep. The ridgepole is twelve feet from the ground. The chimney is a piece of stove-pipe. The walls are made of boards, battened, and the roof is unshingled. Bumblebee has five children, the eldest being eight. His wife's mind is affected. The standing timber, the mill, the lumber railway, and many of the dwellings and small farms belong to non-residents, whose only object is to shear the mountains, squeeze the laborers, and keep Congress from putting lumber on the free list.

Not far beyond Bumblebee's one-room house we entered the primeval forest. We were following the trail through the snow made by us on Sunday. When a quarter of a mile in, we were surprised to find a bear track crossing our path at right angles. The huge brute had passed that way on Tuesday or Wednesday, judging by the condition of the snow. On reaching the spot where we had aroused a barred owl on Sunday, we hid under some small hemlocks, thereby getting a thorough sprinkling,

and I hooted. After my third attempt, I saw a great bird fly through the woods to a point only a hundred yards distant. In a moment or two I hooted again, and then made the fine squeaking noise which a mouse makes. The owl came nearer, and at once began hooting. During nearly ten minutes, in which we kept up a lively exchange of hoots, he varied his notes in several ways, sometimes keeping on, without pausing, from one series of hoots to another. I never heard a more talkative owl. At last he flew into a tree so near us that I could see him clearly through my glass. As he hooted, his throat swelled and pulsed. He searched the trees and the ground with his keen dark eyes. When at last he saw me, I seemed to feel the force of his glare. Then he turned his head to the left and flew away with long, soft sweeps of his wings. At a distance he resumed his hooting, which we could hear for some time as we strolled on up Sabba Day Brook. What we had supposed to be the river, on Sunday, proved to be Sabba Day Brook itself. The water was high, most of the ice had gone, and all the small brooks poured in liberal streams. In one pool I observed a small trout. At last we heard the thunder of the falls, and looked forward eagerly to see them. The stream seemed to issue from the solid rock, for directly

across the channel rose a cliff of dark granite crowned with black spruces and one or two pines whose lofty tops were pale in the fog. As we drew near, the majestic beauty of the place became apparent. At the foot of the black cliff was a deep pool full of strange colors, — greens, olives, and white. The waters in it were restless, rising and settling back, but forever washing the sides of their basin. Four gigantic icicles hung from the top of the cliff, extending to the bottom. One of them, at its lower end, touched a flat shelf of rock, and so became a graceful column supporting the overhanging mosses from which it started. Another adhered to the rock all the way, and was a crystalline pilaster. The other two were free throughout the whole of their thirty feet of length, and tapered to needle points threatening the pool below. The colors in the pool were in fact borrowed from the mosses and ferns which grew in masses at the sides and upon the top of the cliff. Living in perpetual dampness, these exquisite plants flourish and become perfect examples of their kind. The trailing fern fronds were as green and as clean in outline as in summer. They sprang from beds of mosses wonderful in tints. Some were golden olive, others pale green, and still others blood red. Pressed against the upper edge of the black cliff, they

were like a garland of bright flowers on the forehead of some sullen warrior.

The water did not pour into this pool from the cliff, but came to it through a narrow flume or gap in the solid rock which had been concealed from us as we ascended the stream by the high wooded bank opposite the cliff. On reaching the edge of the pool, in the chill shadow of the black rock, we looked up the flume between narrow walls of dark gray granite, and saw, thirty feet or more beyond, another pool, into which was pouring from the left a great sheet of water. This fall, coming from a point fifty or sixty feet above us, and on the extreme left of the flume, had its side towards us; yet, after its green waters struck the upper pool and struggled there awhile, they came through the flume as their only outlet. Clambering up the right-hand or north bank, we gained a point where we could see all the details of this strange cataract.

Sabba Day Brook above the falls flows nearly due east. It strikes a rocky hillside and is deflected to the left by a sharp curve, so that it runs due north. In this direction it has worn a sloping passage to the edge of the falls. Dropping fifty feet into a great pot-hole, it turns abruptly to the east and flows out through the flume into the green pool, past the black ledge,



and then, turning slightly towards the north, hurries on from basin to rapid on its way to the intervale. Standing on a shelf of snow-covered rock overhanging the angle in the fall, we first looked up at the water leaving its level above and hurrying towards its leap, and then down at the boiling pool below and the dashing water in the flume. These falls must be beautiful in summer, with sunlight playing in the leaves, blue sky lending color to the water, and rainbow tints gleaming in the uprising spray. They were also beautiful to-day, — Christmas Day, — when the loneliness of winter was brooding over the mountains, when ice and snow mingled in the surroundings of the falls, and when the gay coloring of the summer forest was replaced by the sombre tones of leafless trees. In summer some trace of man might have jarred upon the perfect solitude of the spot and made it seem less pure. As it was, standing in the untrodden snow, surrounded by the fog, the wild stream, the ice-sheathed rocks, I felt as one might if suffered to land for a while upon some far planet, strange to man, and consecrated to eternal cold and solitude.

We turned away reluctantly and entered the old forest which stands between Sabba Day Brook and Swift River, a quarter of a mile to the north. The rumble of the falls grew fainter

and fainter, then ceased. Blue jays flew through the tree-tops; a great hawk floated by above the trees; kinglets and a brown creeper lisped to us; chickadees, nuthatches, downy woodpeckers, and a great flock of singing siskins came in answer to our whistles; and red squirrels scolded us from their tree-strongholds. When we reached Swift River, we found it broad, still, and without a log or stones to cross upon. Having on water-tight hip-boots, I waded the stream, bearing my companion upon my shoulders. Entering a swamp on the farther shore, we observed fresh hedgehog tracks. In one place the fat beast had lain down in the snow, and some of his soft quills had frozen to his bed and pulled out when he trundled his body along again. At every labored step he left the print of his body in the snow, making a track as conspicuous as a man's. In a tangle of yew branches he had paused and nibbled bark from several stems. After following his trail a hundred yards or more, we lost it in a spruce thicket where the snow had melted.

At the extreme western end of Swift River intervale stands a hill seven or eight hundred feet high, having long sloping lines and a pointed top. It is called Sugarloaf. Its sides are covered with as fine a growth of ancient trees as it is often one's fortune to find in New

England. As this growth includes few spruces, hemlocks, or pines, it has escaped the timber fiends. There are among its trees giant yellow birches, saffron-colored in the mist; beeches a century old, with trunks moulded into shapes suggestive of human limbs strong in muscles, rock maples eighty or ninety feet high and hemlocks with coarse bark unbroken by limbs until, a hundred feet from the hillside, a mat of their interwoven branches finds the sunlight. The cultivated fields and pasture lands of the intervale are singularly free from rocks. Here and there a great boulder can be found, but it is conspicuous in its loneliness. On this hillside, however, boulders of all shapes and sizes are strewn. Most of them are about the size of a load of hay. They are covered with showy lichens and the greenest of green mosses. Selecting one at the very summit of the hill, we searched under its overhanging sides for dry leaves and twigs. Then we broke an old stump into pieces and tore the curling bark from a prostrate birch. All this material was more or less damp, but by patience we secured a little bed of coals which soon dried the rest of our fuel, so that before long a bright blaze and a warm glow gladdened our eyes and comforted our chilled bodies. Then came our cheery Christmas dinner in the primeval forest, upon

a snow-covered hillside, under the projecting face of a great rock, beneath which we sat, with a ruddy fire crackling in front of us. Never Christmas dinner went straighter to the right spot.

While we were resting and enjoying our fire, a flock of sweet-voiced pine grosbeaks came to neighboring tree-tops, a white-bellied nuthatch hung head downwards from a beech-trunk, and two downy woodpeckers called uneasily to each other. At last we extinguished our fire and descended the hill. Five grouse flew noisily from the hillside. Through the trees we could see the white ice on Church's Pond, and towards it we made our way. The pond is the last remnant of the great lake which in distant ages filled the whole of this intervale. Even now an area twenty times as large as the lake adjoins its water, and is almost level with it, being covered with sphagnum, laurel, pitcher-plant, and other bog growth, and offering very uncertain footing. Reaching the pond, we circled around it on the ice, cautiously keeping close to the shore, although a yoke of oxen could probably have blundered across without danger. While we were on the lake the sunset hour passed, and a dense fog crept down upon the serrated spruce forest which borders the water. Three pine grosbeaks flew into the advancing

mists, talking in gentle music to one another. One was left on a dead tree in the bog, and uttered a plaintive cry again and again. Leaving the ice, we struck across the frozen bog, now and then breaking through the soft places, but generally finding ice or roots to sustain our weary feet. As we progressed, we gathered an armful of club-mosses and a bunch of checkerberry plants bearing their gay fruit. The fog closed in around us, and the air became chilly. Not a mountain could we see. It was a relief to strike firm soil, though it was only a few inches higher than the bog. Presently we came to the river, and for a second time I shouldered my friend and took him over dryshod. After doing the same, a few moments later, at Sabba Day Brook, we gained the end of the intervale road near Bumblebee's hut. It was now growing dark, yet a mile of yellow mud still lay before us. Colors had faded; the graceful outlines of the forest were dimmed; nothing but the martial spruces remained with us, drawn up in stiff lines beside the road.

When we reached home, the Christmas greens and checkerberries were made by our inexperienced fingers into a cross, a wreath, and a long strip for festooning. These we presented to the three-year-old Lily of the intervale, whose ideas of Christmas had been obscured by the

fact that no one had given her any presents. These offerings made matters better with her, and I fancied that she pommelled her four kittens less mercilessly than usual, as she gazed at the Christmas greens, and said many times to her grandmother, "Man dave dose to Diddy, he did."

## DOWN THE TORRENT'S PATHWAY.

SATURDAY, December 26, our last day in the intervale, was the least pleasant of our visit. At eight A. M. fog covered the mountains, the forests, and everything, in fact, save a few acres of deep straw-colored field on which only a few soiled patches of snow remained. The engine came in promptly, but found no cars loaded, and went back to Bartlett without freight. About nine o'clock the millmen came home and said there were no logs at the saw-mill, the Frenchmen having been drunk on Christmas. There were rumors of fights among the revelers. About ten o'clock, having finished our packing, we took a short stroll in the rain. There were kinglets in the woods by the roadside, but no crossbills could be found at their favorite feeding-ground. I think they migrated Christmas morning.

We crossed Swift River on the railway bridge and entered the tract of densely wooded swamp which occupies much of the northern side of the intervale. It was at this point that my friend saw the deer on Tuesday. As we strolled along

the track, the voices of birds could be heard on our left. Petulant, and even angry cries came from the damp shades. We stopped and listened, and I said, "It sounds to me as though an owl were being worried in there." Then I entered the spruces, going very slowly and cautiously. Chickadees, nuthatches, and kinglets were chattering and scolding. I pressed in, sometimes working my way on hands and knees over the snow which still remained under the cover of the dense woods. By and by I could see some of the birds. They were evidently greatly excited, and they all seemed to be looking at the same thing,—a something around which they formed a circle. I crept on. Fully twenty small birds were in sight. Three at least were the weak-voiced, sputtering Hudson Bay titmice. Their clamor was continuous. When they saw me, they moved about and scolded at me somewhat. I closely scrutinized the tree which seemed to be the focus of their wrath. A dark brown object projected from the shelter of the trunk. It twitched. I wriggled on a foot or two more, and as I did so a strange little face peered around the tree-trunk, and wild, yellow eyes glared at me from a white face framed in a chocolate brown hood. I fairly held my breath and half closed my eyes while the tiny owl stared at me. Slowly he



looked away, and flew a few feet to another spruce branch. He was now facing me, and he watched me narrowly. Most of his accusers had gone, and soon all departed, the rain falling more briskly, and a cold easterly wind shaking moisture from the trees. The little owl shook himself and seemed melancholy. He was getting wet, and he did not like my looks at all. He flew again, and a second time I kept him within sight. His eyes were encircled by discs of white mingling with snowy eyebrows, so that nearly the whole of his monkey-like countenance was white. The back and top of his head were brown, and the same dark color closed in round his neck and throat, as a baby's cap closes round its face. The owl's breast was light, and marked by several broad perpendicular stripes of reddish brown. His back was dark, and so were his wings, save for some white spots. From the crown of his downy head to the soles of his wicked little clawed feet, this tiny Aca-dian measured not more than seven or eight inches.

My constant watching made the little fellow very uneasy. He flew nine times from branch to branch or tree to tree, yet I managed to follow him closely. From one of his perches he could not see my face well, and it was amusing to see him stretch himself to his full height and

peep over the obscuring branch. On another perch he was perfectly in view. As he watched me he tipped his head first on one side, then on the other. Then he would poke it forward or swing it round on his supple little neck, and strive to get my measure if not my purposes. I squeaked like a mouse, and he became agitated, looking keenly at the snow near me. Suddenly, without warning, he flew into a long, narrow opening in the spruces and disappeared in its windings. Our search for him was in vain, and we hurried home to dry ourselves once again before taking our long drive to Conway.

One o'clock saw us beneath a huge cotton umbrella, packed under a fur robe, on the back seat of a light two-horse wagon. The east wind beat fiercely in our faces, and the horses shook their heads and danced as the rain stung them. The cloud masses rolled through the valley, eddying between the mountains much as the Swift River whirls around its boulders. Sometimes the mists opened and a dark face of forest or damp rock showed for a moment. With a crack of the whip and a good-by to our hostess we dashed away. Through the window I caught a last glimpse of little Diddy, curled up on a big feather-bed, taking her midday nap. Then flying mud, rain, horses, and soaking forests alone met the eye, and we hurried eastward.

The level intervale was soon left behind, and the road began the descent towards the Saco. Swift River roared below us; brooks came tumbling down their rough channels, poured under or across the road, and merged their currents in the river's. The trees swayed and shook rain from their shoulders. Now in front of us, now to our left, the madly descending river and its presiding mountain walls were always in sight. The bare faces of the ledges, the rent hillsides and sloping sand-banks, the boulders heaped in countless numbers in the river bed, all told of forgotten days like this day of storm-fury, when the waters of the pent-up lake in the valley we had left rebelled against these hillsides and ledges, and tore them in fragments, sweeping over them towards the liberty of water, — the sea.

The northern spurs of Chocorua came towards us through the mist as though to crush us; but the horses dashed on, leaving their threatening heights behind. Then Bear Mountain's black spruces and glistening cliffs barred our way; but we followed the river's lead and came out into the pastures and fields next to Moat. After nearly three hours of soaking, our steaming horses drew up at Conway station, and we were left to dry and await the train. Letters accumulated during the week made the time pass

quickly until the train came and we were fairly homeward bound. The storm hid the mountains and half obscured Six Mile Pond and its ragged pitch-pine shores. Rain — cold, stinging, winter rain — beat upon the Bearcamp, Salmon Falls, the Piscataqua, and the Merri-mac. The night inside of Salem tunnel was no darker than the night on Saugus marshes, and even the myriad lights of Boston reflected in the Mystic only made the winter gloom more visible. As I struggled through the Saturday-night crowd on the narrow streets near the stations, and marked the faces of waif and thief, drunkard, jester, sordid vender of evil wares, weary workman or thrice weary workwoman, my heart was heavier than it had been in the wild valley back of Passaconaway. Even Bumblebee, with his sick wife and five children, crowded into one room in that hut by Sabba Day Brook, had something of life of which this foul city humanity knows nothing. Certainly Bumblebee's boys lack the chance to absorb the virus of the slums which the wretched waifs of the streets have. As I waited for my Cambridge car, the stream of humanity surged and eddied round me and the foul fog hung over us. Swift River, plunging on resistlessly towards the sea, is seeking rest, far away; but this stream of humanity, — what is it seeking? To

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me it seemed to be seeking anything but the rest, everything but the peace, to which its current ought to tend.

Fast and furious as is the torrent of Swift River, its beginning is in the heavens, and as long as the noble forests cloak the hills and guard the springs, so long will its current be sustained by fresh supplies of moisture drawn from the distant sea. This human current, coursing into and through the city, draws a part of its strength from the hills. All our New England uplands are draining their youth and strength into the cities, but the ocean which these life-streams reach gives back no gentle, purified life to fill the mountain farms. It takes all, pollutes much, but yields nothing in return.

A deep-toned bell in the Old North Church spoke to the foggy night. Answering voices came from a dozen belfries. They seemed to call in review the long year now drawing to its close. Years are as days to them in their high places far above the human stream, but years are very real to us who can count so few of them before we reach that wide Ocean towards which our stream flows. The flower has a day for its year, the gnat an hour. What a mighty harvest Death has reaped since this year began; yet no one expects any shrinkage in the current

of life in the next year. The world's rhythm will be just as strong, just as even, just as full of joy to those who will accept joy as the birds accept it. What, then, is death if it cannot diminish the sum total of creation's forces? Is it more than a transfer of energy from one point to another? When the flower dies we can see and measure the transfer; when a man dies we who live cannot see it all, but we can measure the poor shell which is left to us and feel sure, terribly sure at first, joyously sure in time, that all which was there in life is not still there; that something has been transferred where we can neither see nor measure it.

The year begins in snow and ends in snow. When it begins, the pendulum of life is far up at the left of its arc, all its force is gathered in position, none is displayed in motion. But suddenly the pendulum begins to move; it is falling; it moves faster and faster towards the right. Then it is that snows melt, buds swell, birds come northward singing, dormant creatures leave their caves, and all Nature displays her latent energy in motion. Just when the motion of the pendulum is fastest it passes that middle and lowest point in its arc and begins to turn its momentum into the force of position. Up it goes, and as it ascends to the far right, it goes more and more slowly until finally it

stops. This upward swing in Nature begins when the first flowers fade, the first nestlings are hatched, and the first leaves fall. In summer we do not always notice the lessening speed of Nature's motions; not until autumn comes do we realize that the days are shorter, the sun's rays less warm, the birds fewer, and vegetation almost without power of growth. In December the pendulum stops and all that Nature has of energy is latent, awaiting the turn in the world's rhythm.

The baby, gurgling and cooing in its basket, is full of latent forces. As life goes on, these powers are exercised more and more to the flood, less and less as the tide ebbs. Yet who is there who dares to say that when old age is reached there is not as much laid by in that soul wrapped in its weary body as there was in the infant full of latent power? We know not where the infant's forces came from, nor where the dying man's energy goes to, but if Nature teaches us anything, it teaches us that forces such as these are eternal in the same sense that matter is eternal and space endless.





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